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BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

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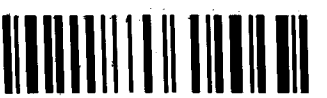

THE REV. SYDNEY SMITH:

HIS LIFE, CHARACTER, AND WRITINGS.

(FROM THE EDINBURGH REVIEW, JULY, 1855.)

A Memoir of the Reverend Sydney Smith. By his Daughter, LADY HOLLAND. With Selections from his Letters. Edited by MRS. AUSTIN. In 2 vols. London: 1855.

THE publication of this book affords us the opportunity for which we have been anxiously watching, which we must ere long have found or made for ourselves had it not presented itself. We should be guilty of an unpardonable neglect of duty were we to allow Sydney Smith to be definitively placed amongst the illustrious band of English worthies in the Temple of Fame at the risk of seeing too low a pedestal assigned to him, without urging on the attention of contemporaries, and recording for the instruction of posterity, his claims to rank as a great public benefactor, as well as his admitted superiority in what we must make bold to call his incidental and subordinate character of 'wit.' It was in this Journal that he commenced his brilliant and eminently useful career as a social, moral, and poli-

tical reformer. He persevered in that career through good and evil report, with unabated vigour and vivacity, both in writing and conversation, until the greater part of his original objects had been attained; and the simplest recapitulation of these would be sufficient to show that his countrymen have durable benefits and solid services, as well as pleasant thoughts and lively images, to thank him for.

With, perhaps, the single exception of Lord Brougham, no one man within living memory has done more to promote the improvement and well-being of mankind, by waging continual war, with pen and tongue, against ignorance and prejudice in all their modifications and varieties; nor should it be forgotten, that, although he wielded weapons very like those which had been employed in the immediately preceding age to undermine law, order, and religion, his exquisite humour was uniformly exerted on the side of justice, virtue, and rational freedom. Indeed, it would hardly have been possible to pervert or misapply so rare and distinctive a gift, being, as it notoriously was, the intense expression, the flower, the cream, the quintessence, of reason and good sense. We will not say that, like Goldsmith, he adorned everything he touched, but he compelled everything he touched to appear in its natural shape and genuine colours. In his hands the logical process called the *reductio ad absurdum* operated like the spear of Ithuriel. No form of sophistry or phase of bigotry could help throwing off its disguise at his approach; and the dogma which has been deemed questionable touching ridicule in general, may be confi-

dently predicated of *his*, namely, that it was literally and emphatically the test of truth.

'Sydney Smith's Life: he who opens this book under the expectation of reading in it curious adventures, important transactions, or public events, had better close the volume, for none of these things will he find therein.'

So stands the first sentence of Lady Holland's preface, and such an announcement at starting must be admitted to be the reverse of a temptation or a lure.

'Nothing,' she proceeds, 'can be more thoroughly private and eventless than the narrative I am about to give; yet I feel myself, and I have reason to believe there are many who will feel with me, that this Life is not, therefore, uninteresting or unimportant; for, though circumstances over which my father had no control forbade his taking that active share in the affairs of his country for which his talents and his character so eminently fitted him, yet neither circumstances nor power could suppress these talents, or subdue and enfeeble that character; and I believe I may assert, without danger of contradiction, that by them, and the use he has made of them, he has earned for himself a place amongst the great men of his time and country.

'Such being the case, however, his talents, and the employment of them, are alone before the world. This is but half the picture, and I believe few who have known so much do not wish to know more.

'The mode of life, the heart, the habits, the thoughts and feelings, the conversation, the home, the occupations of such a man,—all, in short, which can give life and reality to the picture,—are as yet wanting; and it is to endeavour to supply this want that I have ventured to undertake this task.'

The task was a labour of love, and, like almost all

such labours, it has been efficiently as well as conscientiously performed. This monument erected by filial piety to our revered and lamented friend's memory, will at once compel unhesitating and universal assent to what might otherwise be thought an exaggerated estimate of his genius and his worth. It was a theory of Lavater that we insensibly contract a certain degree of physical resemblance, especially as regards expression, to those with whom we live much in domestic intimacy. Be this as it may, there can be little doubt that a master mind exercises a powerful influence on the feelings, understandings, and modes of thought of those who are brought into hourly contact with it through a series of years. When the head of a family, besides bearing the indelible stamp of intellectual superiority, is of a genial, affectionate, and communicative disposition, the other members commonly contract a habit of looking at objects from the same point of view or through the same medium, adopt similar models of excellence, and square their conduct by analogous standards of propriety.

It is upon this principle that we account for what, under the circumstances, may be termed the fortunate agreement of tone, taste, and turn of mind between Sydney Smith and his biographer. No one but an admiring, sympathising, and cordially co-operating daughter, or helpmate, could or would have supplied the most suggestive, illustrative, and consequently most valuable portions of the work; those, for example, descriptive of the Parsonage of Foston, his house, his furniture, his equipages, his establishment, and his way of life there. The earnestness and singleness of purpose with which

these passages are written, actually impart some of the paternal force and colouring to the language, thereby compensating for the occasional negligence of the composition and a want of polish in the style.

Mrs. Austin, who has edited the second volume containing a selection from the Letters, was also well qualified by a friendship of many years, by reciprocated esteem, and by intellectual accomplishments, to form a just and adequate conception of her undertaking. She has executed it, as might have been anticipated, with irreproachable discretion and discrimination; and altogether, although it may sound strange that the delineation of a character so essentially masculine as Sydney Smith's should have been reserved for female pens, we believe that any disappointment which may be felt after a patient perusal of these volumes, may be mainly attributable to incorrect and illusory notions of the scope and capabilities of such a biography. The life of a writer, or artist, is in his works. Their original charm and influence cannot be reproduced by any vividness of description or eloquence of narrative: the excitement of surprise or novelty is unattainable; and the utmost that can reasonably be expected from a Memoir like the one before us is, that it shall revive agreeable reminiscences, awaken elevating associations, stimulate honourable ambition, supply fresh beacons for our guidance, and enable us, for the edification of the living, to arrive at a just estimate of the merits and demerits of the dead.

The leading incidents of Sydney Smith's career are soon told, and a brief summary of these will form a

natural and necessary introduction to the remarks which we propose to make upon them.

He was born at Woodford, Essex, in 1771, the second of four brothers. So long as mankind shall continue to attach importance to ancestral distinctions, it will be an idle affectation to depreciate them; and many enlightened men, famous for their superiority to popular weaknesses and vulgar errors, have endeavoured to defend the pride of birth on philosophical grounds. 'A lively desire of knowing and recording our ancestors,' says Gibbon, 'so generally prevails, that it must depend on some common principle in the minds of men.' In the same spirit of candour, Bishop Watson has observed—'Without entering into a disquisition concerning the rise of this general prejudice, I freely own that I am a slave to it myself.' Sydney Smith had none of it. He once laughingly declared, in reference to the somewhat laboured attempt of the author of 'Waverley' to establish a pedigree, 'when Lady Lansdowne asked me about my grandfather, I told her he disappeared about the time of the Assizes, and we asked no questions.'

This, we need hardly say, was a jocular fabrication; for his descent was respectable on the side of each parent, and Lady Holland, unappalled by Sir David Brewster's authority, still retains hopes of being able to claim Sir Isaac Newton for an ancestor. Her account of her paternal grandfather, Mr. Robert Smith, is that 'he was very clever, odd by nature, but still more odd by design; and that (having first married a beautiful girl, from whom he parted at the church door) he spent

all the early part of his life partly in wandering over the world for many years, and partly in diminishing his fortune, by buying, altering, spoiling, and then selling about nineteen different places in England.' The beautiful girl was Miss Ollier, or D'Olier, the youngest daughter of a Languedoc emigrant for conscience' sake. She was the mother of the four Smiths, Robert (Bobus), Cecil, Courtenay, and Sydney, and we are requested to believe that all the finest qualities of their minds were derived from her.

The talents of the Smiths for controversy must have been singularly precocious, for the tradition goes that, before they were old enough for school, they might be seen 'neglecting games, and often lying on the floor, stretched over their books, and discussing with loud voice and vehement gesticulation, every point that arose.' Robert and Cecil were sent to Eton, Courtenay and Sydney to Winchester, where Sydney rose in due time to be captain of the school. Such were his own and his brother's proficiency that their schoolfellows signed a round-robin refusing to compete for the college prizes, if the Smiths, who always gained them, were allowed to enter the lists.

One incident of his schooldays is commemorated in the first Letter to Archdeacon Singleton: 'I was at school and college with the Archbishop of Canterbury (Howley); fifty-three years ago he knocked me down with the chessboard for checkmating him, and now he is attempting to take away my patronage. I believe these are the only two acts of violence he ever committed in his life.'

He used to say, 'I believe whilst a boy at school, I made above ten thousand Latin verses, and no man in his senses would dream in after-life of ever making another. So much for life and time wasted.' There is another current remark attributed to him,—that a false quantity at the commencement of the career of a young man intended for public life was rarely got over; and when a lady asked him what a false quantity was, he explained it to be in a man the same as a *faux pas* in a woman.

On leaving Winchester, he was placed for six months at Mont Villiers, in Normandy, to learn French, and he then went to New College, Oxford, where nothing remarkable is recorded of him, except that he obtained, by virtue of his Winchester honours, first a scholarship, and then a fellowship yielding about 100*l.* a year. No sooner was this limited provision secured, than his father abandoned him to his own résources, which were insufficient, he thought, to justify him in studying for the profession of his choice—the Bar. So, after being within an ace of going out as supercargo to China, he reluctantly made up his mind to enter the Church.

This determination is doubtless to be regretted for his own sake. Besides possessing the talents which are commonly deemed sufficient to insure forensic success, such as acuteness, readiness, boldness, an intuitive knowledge of the springs of action, dialectic skill, and command of language, he was preeminently endowed with the no less indispensable requisites of patience and perseverance. He would have bided his time. He would neither have been disheartened by neglect, nor have

sunk under the sickness of hope deferred, nor have been turned aside by political, social, or literary aspirations, nor have dropped out of the race because he was disgusted with the jockeyship, or annoyed by the heat, dust, and clamour of the course. He might have turned out a Scarlett at *Nisi Prius*, and an Ellenborough on the Bench. He would also have been spared the sarcasms, galling though ill-founded, so repeatedly levelled at him for trifling with his sacred vocation. But if he had devoted all his energies to the Law—proverbially a jealous mistress—he must have given up to a profession what was meant for mankind, and the world would have lost incalculably by the change.

When it is asked why he did not do what would be done by most aspiring young men similarly situated in our day,—why he did not trust to his pen for supplying the required funds in aid of the income from his fellowship,—the obvious answer is, that sixty years since, reviews and magazines stood on a widely different footing. Their rate of pay to contributors was scanty in the extreme. They were mostly got up for the booksellers by the regular denizens of Grub Street, and a Fellow of New College could hardly have been accused of undue fastidiousness, if he had dismissed at once, assuming it to have occurred to him, the notion of being enrolled in such a troop. Amongst other good effects universally admitted to have resulted from the establishment of this Journal, must be ranked the triumphant vindication of the dignity of our craft. So signal has been our success in this respect, that people find it difficult to imagine a period when it was a moot point in the

minor morals, whether a gentleman could receive pecuniary remuneration for an article. Swift quarrelled with Harley for offering to pay him in hard cash for his literary aid in the 'Examiner.' Lord Jeffrey was visited with misgivings which were not overcome without a struggle. In May, 1803, he writes:—'The terms are, as Mr. L. says, without precedent; but the success of the work is not less so. . . . All the men here will take their —— guineas, I find, and, under the sanction of that example, I think I may take my Editor's salary also without being supposed to have suffered any degradation.'

We learn from the same high authority, Lord Cockburn's 'Life of Jeffrey,' that, after three numbers of the Review had been published on the voluntary principle, it was Sydney Smith himself who suggested that no permanent reliance could be placed in amateurs; a sagacious hint, which the late Professor Wilson condensed into his well-known maxim, that 'an unpaid contributor is *ex vi termini* an ass.' But we are anticipating, and we have not yet brought Mr. Smith to the scene of his earliest labours in the grand cause of civil and religious liberty. We must first accompany him to his curacy in Salisbury Plain, where he underwent the most imminent risk of starvation, mental and bodily.

His parish was Netherhaven, near Amesbury, a village consisting of a few scattered farms and cottages: 'once a week a butcher's cart came over from Salisbury; it was then only he could obtain any meat, and he often dined, he said, on a mess of potatoes

sprinkled with a little ketchup.' Too poor to command books, his only resource was the squire; and his only relaxation, not being able to keep a horse, long walks over those interminable plains, on one of which he narrowly escaped being buried alive in a snow drift. This dreary existence lasted two years, when the squire, Mr. Beech, took a fancy to him, and engaged him as tutor to his eldest son. 'It was arranged that I and his son should proceed to the University of Weimar, in Saxony. We set out, but before reaching our destination Germany was disturbed by war, and in stress of politics we put into Edinburgh, where I remained five years.'

In 1797, the year of his arrival, this city was in a kind of transition state between two ages or generations, either of which might be excused for designating itself as Augustan. David Hume, Adam Smith, and Robertson were the central figures of the earlier period: Walter Scott, Playfair, Chalmers, and Jeffrey of the later; whilst Mackenzie and Dugald Stewart may be described as connecting links between the two. Or (to apply the beautiful imagery of Burke) before one splendid orb was entirely set, and whilst the horizon was still in a blaze with its descending glory, in an opposite quarter of the heavens arose another luminary, and for its hour became lord of the ascendant. Yet little did the survivors of the Robertsonian circle think of the ample compensation that was in store for them, and scornful, probably, or mistrustful was the passing glance which they cast on the newly discovered stars just beginning to twinkle through the haze.

Besides the indigenous celebrities which, about the end of the last century, the modern Athens was breeding up for her own local attraction and illustration, she had become the chosen resort of several young Englishmen who have since done honour to their training, and proved a source of becoming pride to their nursing mother. Lord Lansdowne, Lord Webb Seymour, Francis Horner, and Lord Brougham belonged to this category, and formed no unimportant addition to the list of new acquaintance, speedily to become valued and lifelong friends, amongst whom Sydney Smith received a ready welcome during his expatriation in the North. On the whole, therefore, the 'stress of politics' which compelled him to put into Edinburgh, instead of repairing to Weimar and falling under the influence of Goethe or quizzing him, may have been a fortunate occurrence; and we are by no means sure that even the solitary confinement of the curacy was time wasted in the long run. Clever and lively companions would have afforded useful instruction for the critic and capital practice for the controversialist; but, as regards the development of his thinking powers, commend us to the lonely meditations of Salisbury Plain.

The Memoir is singularly meagre of information during his five years' sojourn in Edinburgh; and the earliest letter in the selection bears the date of 1801, the fourth year after his arrival there. He was in the thirty-first year of his age when this Review was projected. Are we to infer that so active-minded a man, with his laudable aspirations for distinction and his fertility of resource, was content to let his faculties lie

fallow during so protracted an interval, or that he found a satisfactory occupation for them in reading with his pupils, or in metaphysical discussions with his friends? An incident told in connection with his marriage, which took place some time in 1799, rather adds to the mystery, as proving that the spur of straitened means was amongst his other stimulants to extraordinary exertion. Lady Holland tells us that it was lucky her mother, whose maiden name was Pybus, had some fortune, since her father's only tangible and appreciable contribution towards their future *ménage* were six small silver teaspoons, which, from much wear, had become the ghosts of their former selves. One day, in the madness of his joy, he came running into the room and flung these into her lap, saying, 'There, Kate, you lucky girl, I give you all my fortune.'

In a letter written long after he had left Edinburgh, he exclaims, 'When shall I see Scotland again? Never shall I forget the happy days passed there, amidst odious smells, barbarous sounds, bad suppers, excellent hearts, and most enlightened and cultivated understandings.' He did not take the less kindly to the Scotch on account of their alleged insensibility to humour. 'It requires,' he used to say, 'a surgical operation to get a joke well into a Scotch understanding.' Charles Lamb stoutly maintained the same doctrine, and we fear that an attempt on our part to dispute it will meet with no better success than the essay of the Edgeworths on Irish Bulls, written to prove that the Irish make no more bulls than other nations, and proving incontestably that they make more than

all the other nations of Europe put together. Yet the imputation of insensibility to humour is a curious one to be fixed indelibly on the countrymen of Burns, Walter Scott, Galt, Lockhart, John Wilson, and Peter Robertson.

One of their 'raws' he was especially fond of rubbing. 'Their temper,' he writes, 'stands anything but an attack on their climate; even the enlightened mind of Jeffrey cannot shake off the illusion that myrtles flourish on Craig Crook. In vain I have represented to him that they are of the genus *Carduus*, and pointed out their prickly peculiarities. He sticks to his myrtle illusions, and treats my attacks with as much contempt as if I had been a wild visionary, who had never breathed his caller air, nor lived and suffered under the rigour of his climate, nor spent five years in discussing metaphysics and medicine in that garret of the earth—that handle-end of England—that land of Calvin, oat-cakes, and sulphur.'

His account of the origin of this Journal can hardly be accepted as literally exact. 'One day we happened to meet in the eighth or ninth story or flat in Buccleugh Place, the elevated residence of the then Mr. Jeffrey. I proposed that we should set up a Review: this was acceded to with acclamation. I was appointed Editor, and remained long enough in Edinburgh to edit the first number of the "Edinburgh Review." The motto I proposed for the Review was

> "Tenui musam meditamur avenâ."
> "We cultivate literature on a little oatmeal."

But this was too near the truth to be admitted, and so we took our present grave motto from Publius Syrus, of

whom none of us had, I am sure, ever read a single line.' He had the principal voice in the selection and arrangement of the articles; but according to the detailed account of the transaction supplied by Lord Jeffrey to Mr. Robert Chambers in 1846, there was no editor, in the modern acceptation of the office, for the first three Numbers. 'As many of us as could be got to attend used to meet in a dingy room of Willison's printing-office, in Craig's Court, where the proofs of our own articles were read over and remarked upon, and attempts were made to sit in judgment on the few manuscripts which were then afforded by strangers. But we had seldom patience to go through with these; it was found necessary to have a responsible editor, and the office was pressed upon me. . . . . Smith was by far the most timid of the confederacy, and believed that unless our incognito was strictly maintained we could not go on a day; and this was his object for making us hold our dark divans at Willison's office, to which he insisted on our repairing singly, and by back approaches, or by different lanes!'

Now that the fame of the band, at least of its leading members, rests upon an imperishable basis, such precautions may well seem superfluous; but, without embarking into the wide question of anonymous writing, we may suggest that Sydney Smith had reason on his side. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.* The only mode of insuring a fair trial was to remain shrouded in mystery at starting; and if anything could have checked the success of the enterprise, it would have been a notification to the public that a set of

briefless barristers, unemployed doctors, embryo statesmen, and mute inglorious orators, with the aid of an ex-curate, were about to electrify the republic of letters and inaugurate a new era in criticism.

'It is impossible,' remarks Lord Cockburn, 'for those who did not live at the time and in the heart of the scene to feel, or almost to understand, the impression made by the new luminary, or the anxieties with which its motions were observed. It was an entire and instant change of everything that the public had been accustomed to in that sort of composition. The old periodical opiates were extinguished at once.'

It is also a fact worth noticing, that the first Number, although an apology was offered in the preface for the length of some of the articles, contained twenty-nine, of which seven were from the pen of Sydney Smith —one of these occupying rather less than a page. It professes to be a review of the 'Anniversary Sermon of the Royal Humane Society,' by W. Langford, D.D., and runs thus:

'An accident, which happened to the gentleman engaged in reviewing this Sermon, proves, in the most striking manner, the importance of this Charity for restoring to life persons in whom the vital power is suspended. He was discovered with Dr. Langford's Discourse lying open before him, in a state of the most profound sleep; from which he could not, by any means, be awakened for a great length of time. By attending, however, to the rules prescribed by the Humane Society, flinging in the smoke of tobacco, applying hot flannels, and carefully removing the Discourse itself to a great distance, the critic was restored to his disconsolate brothers.

'The only account he could give of himself was, that he remembers reading on, regularly, till he came to the following pathetic description of a drowned tradesman; beyond which, he recollects nothing. [Here follows an extract.] This extract will suffice for the style of the Sermon. The Charity itself is beyond all praise.'

This is given, both as a specimen of Sydney Smith's early manner and as illustrating the contrast which such a style of criticism must have presented to what Lord Cockburn disrespectfully terms the 'old periodical opiates.'

Of course the principal contributors were speedily recognised, and had a mark set against their names by the dispensers of public honours and emoluments. Their position has been thus vividly portrayed by their clerical associate:—'From the beginning of the century to the death of Lord Liverpool was an awful period for those who had the misfortune to entertain liberal opinions, and who were too honest to sell them for the ermine of the judge or the lawn of the prelate; a long and hopeless career in your profession,—the chuckling grin of noodles,—the sarcastic leer of the genuine political rogue,—prebendaries, deans, and bishops made over your head,—reverend renegades advanced to the highest dignities of the Church for helping to rivet the fetters of Catholic and Protestant Dissenters, and no more chance of a Whig administration than of a thaw in Zembla,—these were the penalties exacted for liberality of opinion at that period; and not only was there no pay, but there were many stripes. . . . To set on foot such a journal in such times,—to contribute to-

wards it for many years,—to bear patiently the reproach and poverty which it caused,—and to look back and see that I have nothing to retract, and no intemperance or violence to reproach myself with, is a career of life which I must think to be extremely fortunate.'

Amongst the subjects which he discussed with a peculiar view to political or social amelioration, were—Catholic Emancipation; Popular, Professional, and Female Education; Public Schools; University Reform; Church Reform; Methodism; the Game Laws; Spring Guns; Botany Bay; Chimney Sweepers; Prisons and Prison Discipline; the Poor Laws; Counsel for Prisoners; Indian Missions; Irish Grievances, &c. &c. He not only kept his own contributions free from the revolutionary or democratic tone in politics, and from sceptical tendencies in theological speculation, but amidst all his exuberant jocularity he held close watch over his less guarded associates, and amongst the printed correspondence we find him more than once stating his firm resolve to withdraw from the work if a style of writing which he thought inimical to sound religion were continued.

On the other hand, he had more than once to defend his guerilla-like inroads into grave subjects, and his dashing onslaughts on respectable bores, against the censures of a whole conclave of serious readers, to whom Jeffrey was prone to listen in his desponding or uncongenial moods. How could Pope venture to lay down as an axiom that 'Gentle dulness ever loves a joke?' unless he meant merely that dull people always enjoy their own jokes, which are commonly no laughing

matter. Dulness loves nothing that it does not understand, or that startles it, or that ruffles its sense of self-importance. What Pindar said of music, and Coleridge applied to genius, holds equally true of wit or fun: 'as many as are not delighted by it, are disturbed, perplexed, irritated.' We are consequently not the least astonished to find Sydney Smith driven to the following defence, even at so advanced a stage of his reputation and authority as 1819:

'My dear Jeffrey,—You must consider that Edinburgh is a very grave place, and that you live with philosophers who are very intolerant of nonsense. I write for the London, not for the Scotch market, and perhaps more people read my nonsense than your sense. The complaint was loud and universal of the extreme dulness and lengthiness of the "Edinburgh Review." Too much, I admit, would not do of my style; but the proportion in which it exists enlivens the Review, if you appeal to the whole public, and not to the eight or ten grave Scotchmen with whom you live. I am a very ignorant, frivolous, half-inch person; but, such as I am, I am sure I have done your Review good, and contributed to bring it into notice. Such as I am, I shall be, and cannot promise to alter.'

Sydney Smith ceased to reside in Edinburgh after 1803, and in 1804 we find him settled in Doughty Street, Russell Square, in the midst of a colony of lawyers, the most rising and accomplished of whom, by a natural affinity, were attracted to him. Sir Samuel Romilly, the first Lord Abinger, and Sir James Mackintosh were the most distinguished; and, amongst other friends, Lady Holland enumerates Dr. Marcet, Mr. Dumont, Mr. Wishaw, Lord Dudley (then Mr. Ward), Mr.

Sharpe, Mr. Rogers, Mr. Luttrell, and Mr. Tenant. There was also an old Abbé Dutens, bent on inventing a universal language, who, on Smith's suggesting a few grammatical difficulties, exclaimed,—'Oh non, Monsieur, ce sont là des bagatelles! La seule difficulté que je trouve, c'est de faire agir tous les rois de l'Europe au même temps.' The most important of his early social successes was an introduction to Holland House, 'the most formidable ordeal,' says his daughter, 'that a young and obscure man could well go through. He was shy, too, then: yet I believe, in spite of the shyness, they soon discovered and acknowledged his merits, and deemed him no unmeet company for their world. And what a world it was!'

Sydney Smith shy at thirty-three! Theodore Hook also used to complain to his dying day that he had never completely overcome the uncomfortable sensation of entering a room; and an eminent law-lord (Lord Lyndhurst), the very model of senatorial and judicial eloquence of the composed and dignified order, has been seen to tremble when he rose to address the House of Lords, like a thorough-bred racer when first brought to the starting-post. One obvious solution of this phenomenon is that the delicacy of perception, the exquisite sensibility to impressions, and the impulsiveness, which are essential to humour or eloquence, are almost necessarily accompanied by a certain degree of nervous tremulousness, just as a finely strung harp vibrates at the slightest touch or whenever the faintest breeze passes over it. At all events, leaving the problem to the metaphysicians, we see not the smallest reason for ques-

tioning the fact that Sydney Smith did suffer from shyness, although neither comparative poverty nor unequal rank ever shook the perfect independence of his bearing in society.

He was fond of drawing a ludicrous and (we suspect) overcharged picture of his distresses as a diner-out, when, as he said, he could not afford a hackney coach. Balzac's hero, in a similar predicament, carefully picks his way under the terrible apprehension that an unlucky splash may deprive him of his *soirée*, and leave the field open to a wealthier rival. Sydney Smith, according to his own account, used to carry a pair of dress shoes in his pocket, and change them in the hall. 'The servants,' he added, 'stared at me at first, but I made them laugh, and they got used to me.' On hearing of the offence taken by his more fastidious friend Jeffrey at the appearance of a straw (emblematic of the more humble vehicle) on the carpet at Lady Morgan's, he exclaimed, 'a straw, a solitary straw! why I have been at literary parties where the floor looked like a stubble-field.'

If the fathers of a hundred ruined families could be put to the question or brought to confession, ninety at least of them would own that their primary embarrassments (like those of the Primrose family) arose from the wish to keep up appearances. Vanity would be found to be a more fruitful source of misery than vice. Rochefoucauld strongly inculcates the expediency of learning how to grow old. The art of growing (or of being and seeming) poor is more rarely studied, and more painful to pursue. It was Sydney Smith's con-

stant care to practise and inculcate it. 'He never,' we are assured by his daughter, 'affected to be what he was not; he never concealed the thought, labour, and struggle it often was to him to obtain the simple comforts of life for those he loved: as to its luxuries, he exercised the most rigid self-denial. His favourite motto on such matters was,—'Avoid shame, but do not seek glory—nothing so expensive as glory;' and this he applied to every detail of his establishment. Nothing could be plainer than his table; yet his society often attracted the wealthy to share his single dish.'

It is a secret worth knowing in a luxurious metropolis, that nothing is so attractive to the wealthy as a plain dinner and a small party. The noble proprietor of half a dozen princely residences will thank you with an effusion of gratitude for asking him to such a dinner, an occurrence perhaps unique in his long life of aristocratic banqueting. 'Better a dinner of herbs where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith.' Better a dinner off a joint where good conversation is, than turtle and venison, *entrées* and *entremets*, with dulness, pretension, and pomposity. Of all the stereotyped delusions of the newspapers, we know few more provoking than their daily announcements that some of the stupidest people in town have 'entertained' a succession of distinguished guests. It was one of Sydney's own half-serious reflections, that the observances enjoined by the Church were tolerably well kept upon the whole, since the rich kept the feasts and the poor the fasts. But he left out of the account the intellectual fasts to

which the richest of the rich submit by way of self-imposed penance for their superfluities.

Still, although a good deal of rational enjoyment may be extracted from a scanty income, it does not follow that we should remain poor longer than we can help. One of the most creditable passages Junius ever wrote was his advice to Woodfall: 'Let all your views in life be directed to a solid, however moderate, independence; without it no man can be happy, nor even honest.' What can be more touching than the scene in the 'Life of Sheridan,' where

> 'The orator, dramatist, statesman, who ran
> Through each mode of the lyre, and was master of all,'

bursts into tears when reproached for some imputed political backsliding, exclaiming, that it was all very well for his noble friends, with their tens, twenties, or fifty thousands a year, to taunt a man who could never give change for half a crown out of his own money in his life. We have heard Sydney Smith revert to this incident, and avow his cordial concurrence in the axiom of a fellow-passenger in a stage coach,—'Poverty, sir, is no disgrace to a man, but it's d–mn–t–n inconvenient.' In his letters he fairly owns that every guinea he was enabled to add to his growing fortune was a gratification to him.

His preaching had been much admired, both at Edinburgh and London; and one of his projects, about 1805, for earning money, was to take the lease of a chapel then occupied by a set of Dissenters called the New Jerusalem, and run the chance of increasing his

pew-rents by his popularity. Four years before, he had unfolded his views of what pupil oratory was, and what it might become without losing any of its indispensable solemnity. 'The English, generally remarkable for doing very good things in a very bad manner, seem to have reserved the maturity and plenitude of their awkwardness for the pulpit. Is it wonder, then, that every semi-delirious sectary who pours forth his animated nonsense with the genuine look and voice of passion, should gesticulate away the congregation of the most profound and learned divine of the Established Church, *and in two Sundays preach him bare to the very sexton?* . . . Why this holoplexia on sacred occasions alone? Why call in the aid of paralysis to piety? Is it a rule of oratory to balance the style against the subject, and to handle the most sublime truths in the dullest language and the driest manner? *Is sin to be taken from men as Eve was from Adam, by casting them into a deep slumber?*'

It was his wish to enter the field against the semi-delirious sectary; but for this purpose he required a licence from the rector of the parish in which the chapel lay, and this was politely but peremptorily declined. Sydney was much annoyed: his family shared his indignation, and his affectionate biographer implies that he was cruelly wronged. 'I appeal to you again,' he wrote, addressing the rector, whose name is suppressed, 'whether anything can be so enormous and unjust as that that privilege should be denied to the ministers of the Church of England, which every man who has folly and presumption enough to differ from it can imme-

diately enjoy.' He who is his own advocate has a fool for a client, is a sound though homely adage. Its literal application to Sydney Smith, in his most incautious moments, would be preposterous; but it is instructive to mark how a man of his intellectual culture could be blinded by eagerness in the pursuit of a favourite object to the palpable unsoundness of his argument. The essential end and object of a church establishment are to prevent this very description of competition which he claims as the inalienable privilege of its ministers. 'With what sincerity, or with what dignity,' asks Paley, 'can a preacher dispense truths of Christianity, whose thoughts are perpetually solicited to the reflection how he may increase his subscription? His eloquence, if he possess any, resembles rather the exhibition of a player who is computing the profits of his theatre.'[1]

'The drama's laws the drama's patrons give,
And those who live to please, must please to live.'

The late lamented Charles Buller, improving on a suggestion of Swift's, proposed to organise a body of dignitaries and ministers of the Church of England, to be called 'The Church Moveable,' or 'The Clergy Unattached;' so that whenever the sectaries were gaining ground in any given district, a bishop's or a dean's party might be sent down to encounter them, as we despatch a captain's or subaltern's party to suppress a riot. But

[1] '*Wagner.* I have often heard say, a player might instruct a priest.

'*Faust.* Yes, when the priest is a player, as may likely enough come to pass occasionally.'—*Goethe's Faust.*

he did not propose to increase their pay in proportion to the number of Dissenters they gained over. On what ground did Sydney Smith himself propose to settle a State provision on the Roman Catholic clergy of Ireland? Was it not in the hope of rendering them independent of their flocks, and of taking away the pecuniary temptation to turbulence?

In 1804, 1805, and 1806 he delivered at the Royal Institution the Lectures first printed for private circulation by Mrs. Sydney Smith in 1849, and subsequently published under the title of 'Elementary Sketches of Moral Philosophy.' They were eminently and deservedly popular. 'His success,' wrote Horner during their delivery, 'has been beyond all possible conjecture; from six to eight hundred hearers; not a seat to be procured, even if you go there an hour before the time. Nobody else, to be sure, could have executed such an undertaking with the least chance of success. For who else could make such a mixture of odd paradox, quaint fun, manly sense, liberal opinions, and striking language?' The portions of the series which attracted most attention were the two lectures on 'Wit and Humour,' in which he broached the startling doctrines that 'the feeling of wit is occasioned by those relations of ideas which excite surprise, and surprise *alone*,' and that wit might be acquired by study like mathematics:

'It is imagined that wit is a sort of inexplicable visitation, that it comes and goes with the rapidity of lightning, and that it is quite as unattainable as beauty or just proportion. I am so much of a contrary way of thinking, that I am convinced a man might sit down as systematically, and

as successfully, to the study of wit, as he might to the study of mathematics: and I would answer for it that, by giving up only six hours a day to being witty, he should come on prodigiously before Midsummer, so that his friends should hardly know him again. For what is there to hinder the mind from gradually acquiring a habit of attending to the lighter relations of ideas in which wit consists? Punning grows upon everybody, and punning is the wit of words. I do not mean to say that it is so easy to acquire a habit of discovering new relations in ideas as in words, but the difficulty is not so much greater as to render it insuperable to habit. One man is unquestionably much better calculated for it by nature than another; but association, which gradually makes a bad speaker a good one, might give a man wit who had it not, if any man chose to be so absurd as to sit down to acquire it.'

Why absurd, if the object were really attainable by study, and the man had no better or more urgent employment or pursuit?

There cannot be a more striking proof of the slenderness of the provision made for the reward or encouragement of intellectual eminence in this country, than the fact that Sydney Smith, with this fulness of reputation, and with his political friends in power, felt compelled to accept the small living of Foston-le-Clay in Yorkshire, which was with some difficulty obtained, through the exertions of Lord and Lady Holland, from the Whig Chancellor, Lord Erskine. Again, however, we maintain, that his character and reputation have rather gained than suffered by what he felt as a severe infliction at the time. His second or third banishment, with its concomitants, brought out into broad relief the

finest points of his understanding and his heart. Buffon somewhere defines or describes genius as a superior aptitude to patience. May not goodness and virtue be resolved into the same element, when an uncongenial course of life is deliberately adopted, and a host of privations and (if you please, petty) miseries are knowingly encountered from a genuine and profound sense of duty?—'A diner-out, a wit, and a popular preacher,' to borrow his own graphic picture of his situation, 'I was suddenly caught up by the Archbishop of York, and transported to my living in Yorkshire, where there had not been a resident clergyman for a hundred and fifty years. Fresh from London, not knowing a turnip from a carrot, I was compelled to farm three hundred acres, and (without capital) to build a parsonage-house.' . . .

'It made me a very poor man for many years, but I never repented it. I turned schoolmaster to educate my son, as I could not afford to send him to school. Mrs. Sydney turned schoolmistress to educate my girls, as I could not afford a governess. I turned farmer, as I could not let my land. A man-servant was too expensive; so I caught up a little garden-girl, made like a milestone, christened her Bunch, put a napkin in her hand, and made her my butler. The girls taught her to read, Mrs. Sydney to wait, and I undertook her morals; Bunch became the best butler in the county.

'I had little furniture, so I bought a cart-load of deals; took a carpenter (who came to me for parish relief, called Jack Robinson), with a face like a full-moon, into my service; established him in a barn, and said, "Jack, furnish my house." You see the result.

'At last it was suggested that a carriage was much

wanted in the establishment; after diligent search, I discovered in the back settlements of a York coachmaker an ancient green chariot, supposed to have been the earliest invention of the kind. I brought it home in triumph to my admiring family. Being somewhat dilapidated, the village tailor lined it, the blacksmith repaired it; nay, (but for Mrs. Sydney's earnest entreaties) we believe the village painter would have exercised his genius upon the exterior; it escaped this danger, however, and the result was wonderful. Each year added to its charms: it grew younger and younger; a new wheel, a new spring; I christened it the *Immortal*; it was known all over the neighbourhood; the village boys cheered it, and the village dogs barked at it: but *Faber meæ fortunæ* was my motto, and we had no false shame.

'Added to all these domestic cares, I was village parson, village doctor, village comforter, village magistrate, and Edinburgh Reviewer; so you see I had not much time left on my hands to regret London.

'My house was considered the ugliest in the county, but all admitted it was one of the most comfortable; and we did not die, as our friends had predicted, of the damp walls of the parsonage.'

Should any reader have felt disposed to question the advantage of having an accomplished and high-minded daughter, bred up at her father's feet and imbued with his noble spirit, for the biographer of such a man, their doubts will vanish into thin air before they have half finished the seventh chapter, describing the building of the Foston Parsonage, and the arrival of the family to take possession of their new residence. Vividly as some familiar scenes in the 'Vicar of Wakefield' are recalled to us by the magic of association, there is no actual likeness, and there are freshness and

novelty in every one of Lady Holland's indelible and faithfully recorded impressions and details:

'But oh, the shout of joy as we entered and took possession!—the first time in our lives that we had inhabited a house of our own. How we admired it, ugly as it was! With what pride my dear father welcomed us, and took us from room to room! Old Molly Mills, the milkwoman, who had charge of the house, grinning with delight in the background. We thought it a palace; yet the drawing-room had no door, the bare plaster walls ran down with wet, the windows were like ground glass from the moisture, which had to be wiped up several times a day by the housemaid. No carpets, no chairs, nothing unpacked; rough men bringing in rougher packages at every moment. But then was the time to behold my father!—amid the confusion, he thought for everybody, cared for everybody, encouraged everybody, kept everybody in good humour. How he exerted himself! how his loud rich voice might be heard in all directions, ordering, arranging, explaining, till the household storm gradually subsided! Each half-hour improved our condition; fires blazed in every room; at last we all sat down to our tea, spread by ourselves on a huge package before the drawing-room fire, sitting on boxes round it; and retired to sleep on our beds placed on the floor;—the happiest, merriest, and busiest family in Christendom.'

If Molly Mills, Annie Kay, Bunch, and Jack Robinson could be transplanted into one of Mr. Thackeray's or Mr. Dickens's monthly numbers, with appropriate parts, their names would speedily become as familiar in men's mouths as household words, whilst Bitty, the pet donkey, is a study for a Sterne. Although, as Sydney Smith admits, visions of croziers did occasionally cross

his waking dreams, all his plans were formed on the hypothesis of his remaining rector of Foston for life. The event nearly justified his prevision; he remained there twenty-two years, and was at length removed to a more fitting sphere, not by the aid or through the instrumentality of those for and with whom he had combated, but by Lord Lyndhurst, 'who,' says Lady Holland, 'had the real friendship and courage to brave the opinions and opposition of his own party, and, though differing from my father in politics, to bestow on him a stall which was then vacant at Bristol.' To this stall was attached the vicarage of Halberton, near Tiverton.

We are here anticipating. He did not quit London for Yorkshire till the summer of 1809, and what Lady Holland calls 'the landing at Foston,' on the completion of the new house, did not take place till March 1814. In the summer of 1807, he and the family were the temporary occupants of a cottage at Sunning, near Reading. 'I believe it was about this period,' she states, 'that a letter from Peter Plymley to his brother Abraham on the subject of the Irish Catholics appeared suddenly in the London world. Its effect, I have been told, was like a spark on a heap of gunpowder. It was quickly followed by another and another; each increasing the eagerness and curiosity of the public. Every effort was made on the part of the existing Government to find out the author in vain: the secret was well kept.' It was kept much as the secret of the authorship of 'Waverley' was kept; being, so far as the general impression was concerned, no secret at all.

'It is true strong suspicion was pointed towards the little village in which my father then was, and a few of those best acquainted with his style felt convinced there was but one man in England who could so write—who could make the most irresistible wit and pleasantry the vehicle of the soundest and most unanswerable argument. But no proof could be obtained.

Exposing the popular arguments against Catholic Emancipation was like firing into a china shop: every shot was pretty sure to bring clattering down a whole heap of nonsense; but Sydney Smith's shots were so directed as to inflict no small amount of damage both on the objects of his advocacy and the supporters of the cause. The famous Plymley Letters added greatly to his reputation, but they exercised on his future fortunes the same kind of influence which the 'Tale of a Tub' exercised upon Swift's. Their irreverence, their sins against good taste, their illiberality towards real or fancied opponents, were no less conspicuous than their wit, humour, logical acuteness, and vivacity. The following is one amongst many passages of the same spirit and tendency:

'I am as disgusted with the nonsense of the Roman Catholic religion as you can be: and no man who talks about such nonsense shall ever tithe the product of the earth; nor shall he meddle with the ecclesiastical establishment in any shape;—but what have I to do with the speculative nonsense of his theology, when the object is to elect the mayor of a county town, or to appoint a colonel of a marching regiment? Will a man discharge the solemn impertinences of the one office with less zeal, or shrink from the bloody boldness of the other with greater timidity

because the blockhead thinks he can eat angels in muffins, and chew a spiritual nature in the crumpet which he buys from the baker's shop.'

He says in a note: 'This passage has been objected to. I cannot see why: it is the plain statement of a Catholic tenet which in my eyes is the consummation of all absurdity.' But it is, and has been for centuries, the tenet of the Catholic Church, of the bulk of learned and enlightened Christendom: it was the tenet of Sir Thomas More, Pascal, and Bossuet: and (if extravagance or unintelligibility constitutes absurdity) it is not more absurd than sundry tenets of the Anglican Church which Sydney Smith was solemnly pledged to uphold.[1] Towards the conclusion of the first letter he says:

'You tell me I am a party man. I hope I shall always be so, when I see my country in the hands of a pert London joker and a second-rate lawyer. Of the first (Canning) no other good is known than that he makes pretty Latin verses: the second (Perceval), seems to me to have the head of a country parson and the tongue of an Old Bailey lawyer.'

No reasonable doubt can be entertained of Canning's earnestness in the cause, although, along with most of the leading statesmen on the same side, he shrank from making a useless sacrifice of his career; but Sydney Smith attacks him in a tone of coarse personality, setting all sense of justice and decorum at

[1] 'Good life be now my task: my doubts are done:
What more could fright my faith than three in one?'
The Hind and Panther.

Fox, in conversation with Rogers, termed Dryden's defence of transubstantiation (beginning with these lines) the finest passage in his finest poem.

defiance. Describing the manner in which the British public exulted over any temporary success during the war, he says:

'If Austria or Prussia armed, doctors of divinity immediately printed those passages out of Habakkuk, in which the destruction of the Usurper by General Mack and the Duke of Brunswick are so clearly predicted. If Bonaparte halted there was a mutiny, or a dysentery. If any one of his generals were eaten up by the light troops of Russia, and picked (as their manner is) to the bone, the sanguine spirit of this country displayed itself in all its glory. What scenes of infamy did the Society for the Suppression of Vice lay open to our astonished eyes: tradesmen's daughters dancing; pots of beer carried out between the first and second lesson; and dark and distant rumours of indecent prints. Clouds of Mr. Canning's cousins arrived by the waggon; all the contractors left their cards with Mr. Rose; and every plunderer of the public crawled out of his hole, like slugs, and grubs, and worms after a shower of rain.'

Again, in reference to fanaticism:

'This is Mr. Canning's term for the detection of public abuses; a term invented by him, and adopted by that simious parasite who is always grinning at his heels. Nature descends down to infinite smallness. Mr. Canning has his parasites; and if you take a large buzzing blue-bottle fly, and look at it in a microscope, you may see 20 or 30 little ugly insects crawling about it, which doubtless think their fly to be the bluest, grandest, merriest, most important animal in the universe, and are convinced the world would be at an end if it ceased to buzz.'

His friends first came into power on the formation of the Canning Ministry in 1827, and it was hardly to be expected that anything could be done for him whilst

that ministry lasted, even if he had not openly joined with Lord Grey in denouncing it. In point of fact, the Whig debt was left unpaid till 1831, when he was appointed to a prebendal stall at St. Paul's by Lord Grey. One of the first things, we are told, which Lord Grey said on entering Downing Street, was, 'Now I shall be able to do something for Sydney Smith.' Then why was not more done for him? Lord Melbourne is reported to have said that there was nothing he more regretted than the not having made Sydney Smith a bishop. This has been denied on good authority; but Lord John Russell writes—'My dear Sydney, I think you are quite right not to be ambitious of the prelacy, as it would lead to much disquiet for you; but, if I had entirely my own way in these matters, you should have the opportunity of refusing it.' At a long antecedent period, Lord Holland thus anticipates the only plausible objection:

'My dear Sydney,—I wish you could have heard my conversation with Lord Grenville the other day, and the warm and enthusiastic way in which he spoke of "Peter Plymley." I did not fail to remind him that the only author to whom we both thought it could be compared in English, lost a bishopric for his wittiest performance; and I hoped that, if we could discover the author, and had ever a bishopric in our gift, we should prove that Whigs were both more grateful and more liberal than Tories.'

We sympathise with the biographer in her protest against any comparison, except in purely mental qualities, with the Dean of St. Patrick's; but we have little doubt that there was a solid foundation for the

limited parallel suggested by Lord Holland, although Sydney was not

> 'By an old murderess pursued,
> A crazy prelate, and a royal prude.'

The persons indicated in this vindictive couplet are the Duchess of Somerset, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Queen Anne. In the 'Windsor Prophecy,' the Duchess is ridiculed for the redness of her hair, and upbraided as having been privy to the murder of her first husband (Thynne, 'Tom of Ten Thousand.') It was doubted, suggests Scott, which imputation she accounted the more cruel insult, especially since the first charge was undefiable, and the second only arose from the malice of the poet. At her instigation, the Archbishop tried to prevent Swift's promotion by questioning his orthodoxy,[1] and when the prelate had failed, she succeeded, by dint of tears and supplications, in inducing her royal mistress to refuse the expected bishopric. When Sydney Smith's claims (which, we fear, never came so nigh the ear of Majesty) were preferred, there was neither Archbishop nor Duchess in the path; yet some one certainly attempted to play, with the Premier, the part which the 'crazy prelate' vainly attempted with Queen Anne. Lady Holland quotes a letter from her father to Lord John Russell, in which (April, 1837) he writes:

'I defy —— to quote one single passage of my writing

[1] 'She first prevailed on the Archbishop of York to oppose it, whose remarkable expression to the queen was, that her Majesty should be sure the man she was going to make a bishop was a Christian.'—*Sheridan.*

contrary to the doctrines of the Church. I defy him to mention a single action of my life which he can call immoral. The only thing he can charge me with would be high spirits and much innocent nonsense. I am distinguished as a preacher, and sedulous as a parochial clergyman. His real charge is, that I am a high-spirited, honest, uncompromising man, whom all the bench of bishops could not turn, and who would set them all at defiance upon great and vital questions. This is the reason why (as far as depends upon others) I am not a bishop; but I am thoroughly sincere in saying I would not take any bishopric whatever, and to this I pledge my honour and character as a gentleman. But, had I been a bishop, you would have seen me on a late occasion, charging —— and —— with a gallantry which would have warmed your heart's blood, and made Melbourne rub the skin off his hands.'

Two years before his death he reverted to this subject in conversation with the writer, in his garden at Combe Florey. 'They showed a want of moral courage in not making me a bishop,' was his remark, 'but I must own that it required a good deal. *They* know, *you* know, all who have lived or talked much with me must know, that I should have devoted myself heart and soul to my duties, and that the episcopal dignity would have sustained no loss in my keeping. But I have only myself to blame if I have been misunderstood.'

The tone in which he spoke and wrote of the dignitaries of the Church, and indeed of his clerical brethren in general, both before and after the accession of his friends to power, may have had something to do with their inability or unwillingness to do more for him. Instances abound. There is his well-known suggestion for a wood pavement round St. Paul's. 'Let the

Dean and Canons lay their heads together and the thing will be done.' Or, his remark to a Scotch lady: 'When I was in Edinburgh, I said to a lady, speaking of the Dean of Faculty, that we thought our Deans in England had no faculties.' She said, 'Well, I call that a very good joke.' He was obviously well aware that jokes at the expense of his profession derived additional zest from his belonging to it, and he rarely misses an opportunity of placing a clergyman in a ridiculous light. Thus, in describing the consequences of an invasion:

'Old wheat and beans blazing for twenty miles round; cart mares shot; sows of Lord Somerville's breed running wild over the country; the minister of the parish wounded sorely in his hinder parts; Mrs. Plymley in fits; all these scenes of war an Austrian or a Prussian has seen three or four times over; but it is now three centuries since an English pig has fallen in a fair battle upon English ground, or a farm house been rifled, or a clergyman's wife been subjected to any other proposals of love than the connubial endearments of her sleek and orthodox mate.'

The advice, he states, which he sent to the Bishop of New Zealand, when the Bishop had to receive the Cannibal Chiefs, was to say to them: 'I deeply regret, sirs, to have nothing on my own table suited to your tastes, but you will find plenty of cold curate and roasted archdeacon on the sideboard.'

It was his comic complaint that he was constantly confounding the Muses and the Articles, so as to be at times uncertain whether there were not thirty-nine Muses and nine Articles; perhaps a better arrangement on the whole, as conducing to harmony both inside and outside the pale of the Church.

Lord Houghton has given the following amongst other instances in his monogram. Sydney Smith *loquitur*:

'I delight in a stage coach and four, and how could I have gone by one as a bishop? I might have found myself alone with a young lady of strong Dissenting principles, who would have called for help to disgrace the Church, or with an atheist who told me what he had said in his heart; and when I had taken refuge on the outside, I might have found an Unitarian in the basket; or, if I got on the box, the coachman might have told me he was once one of those rascally parsons, but had now taken to a better and an honester trade.'

'Why don't the thieves dress with aprons, so convenient for storing stolen goods? You would see the Archbishop of York taken off at every race-course, and not a prize fight without an archdeacon in the paws of the police.'

He seems not to have been aware that the prince of pickpockets, Barrington, did attend a drawing-room in the dress of a bishop, and was apprehended with his lawn-sleeves full of purses and jewelry.

Lord Brougham told Lord Houghton that Sydney Smith applied to him for some preferment short of a bishopric; and that he (Lord Brougham) replied: 'Leave the fastnesses of the Church to others; keep the snugnesses for yourself.' Lord Brougham was never famous for accuracy, and the relation in which he and Sydney Smith stood towards each other, especially as rival reviewers, was the reverse of amicable. Amongst Sydney Smith's papers, hitherto unpublished, is this character of Lord Brougham, written, it is believed, about 1836 or 1837:

'He has a greater variety of knowledge, perhaps, than any man of his day, but knows nothing very profoundly and accurately. It is not just, however, to call him a smatterer. He has considerable mathematical attainments, though far from being a first-rate mathematician: he has a fair knowledge of classics, without being an accomplished scholar; and he is acquainted with the physical sciences, without being in any degree eminent as a natural philosopher. If measured by his own exorbitant pretensions, his attainments are ridiculous: if measured by what other people know, they are considerable, and merit respect. He has great powers of reasoning, and great quickness; little or no imagination, except in sarcasm, for which nature has fitted him up with terrible powers, and has given him also a fair share of wit and humour. His labour for any particular purpose is unwearied, and his activity to promote his ends inexhaustible. He leaves no corner unsearched, no stone unturned, no human being uncoaxed and uncanvassed, or, if needs be, unthreatened and unalarmed.

'He has a total disregard to truth, which as long as the failing was undetected, gave him a great increase of power, and has weakened him in proportion as his true character has been brought to light. His two great passions are vanity and ambition. He considers himself as one of the most wonderful works of Providence, is incessantly aiming to display that superiority to his fellow-creatures, and to grasp at supreme dominion over all men and all things. His vanity is so preposterous that it has exposed him to ridiculous failures, and little which he has written will survive him. His ambition, and the falsehood and intrigues with which it works, have estranged all parties from him, and left him, in the midst of bodily and intellectual strength, an insulated individual whom nobody will trust, and with whom nobody will act: the largest and saddest moral ruin I have ever seen.

'He is a very powerful speaker in Parliament, from his

earnestness, his vehemence, his force of attack and his knowledge of the subject; but is, in spite of these powerful attributes, universally complained of as too long and tedious. When he has got hold of an idea, instead of touching it lightly and passing on, he remains upon it, turns it over again, till a sensation of fatigue is produced; everyone wishes it was dismissed, and that the orator would pass on to something else. Still, with all these faults he is a great speaker.

'At the bar he had little success; as a counsel, he was very inferior to very inferior men; and his judicial career was a lamentable display of arrogant ignorance. He is very good-natured, and not unwilling to oblige. He is agreeable in society, not by conversation, which he does not understand, but by a lively monopoly of talking in which his hearers very willingly acquiesce. His opinions upon all public matters are (where he has no interest to serve) in the highest degree philosophical. His first object is his own ambition, but, that served and completely served, he loves the public good, and understands it. He is deficient in personal courage, is generous and munificent, with a slight, and not very slight, tinge of insanity, to which he is said to have some hereditary pretension. He is not a man of these times, where everything is known, and when the conversations, and opinions, and lives of men are so boldly and publicly discussed, and where a mass of intelligence and common sense is, in the broad face of day, opposed to the splendid errors of great men.

'If he had been born in Italy in the fifteenth century, he would have convulsed that country from Venice to Calabria, and gained an immense historical reputation by scattering war, fraud, misery, stratagem, and spoil over that fine portion of the world.'

In default of an episcopal palace, Sydney Smith removed, in 1828, to Combe Florey, near Taunton,

which he soon converted into one of the most comfortable and delightful of parsonages. The house was situated in a picturesque little valley, at the end of which was a wood with pleasant walks cut through it. The climate was warm and soft, and he was wont to expatiate on its merits in a style somewhat resembling Lord Jeffrey's myrtle delusions at Craig Crook. On one occasion, when some London visitors were expected, he called in art to aid nature, and caused oranges to be tied to the shrubs in the drive and garden. The stratagem succeeded admirably, and great was his exultation when an unlucky urchin from the village was detected in the act of sucking one through a quill. It was as good, he said, as the birds pecking at Zeuxis' grapes, or the donkeys munching Jeffrey's supposed myrtles for thistles. Another time, on a lady's happening to hint that the pretty paddock would be improved by deer, he fitted his two donkeys with antlers, and placed them with this extraordinary head-gear on a rising ground immediately in front of the windows. The effect, enhanced by the puzzled looks of the animals, was ludicrous in the extreme. On being asked the year following for a renewal of the exhibition, he declined on the ground that donkeys with horns had been regarded as typical of the neighbouring squires.

But in his most frolicsome moods he never practised what is called practical joking, agreeing in opinion on this topic with the late Marquis of Hertford, who checked a party of ingenious tormentors at Sudbourn with the remark, that the human mind was various, and that there was no knowing how much melted butter a

gentleman would bear in his pocket without quarrelling. There was one practical joke, however, which Sydney admitted he should like to see repeated, if only as an experiment in physics and metaphysics. It was the one played off in the last century on a Mr. O'Brien, whose bedroom windows were carefully boarded up, so that not a ray of light could penetrate. When he rang his bell in the morning, a servant appeared, half dressed and yawning, with a candle, and anxiously asked if he was ill. Ashamed of the fancied irregularity, the patient recomposed himself to sleep, but at the end of a couple of hours rang again, and again the same pantomime was enacted. 'Open the shutters.' They were opened, and all without was as dark as a wolf's mouth. He was kept in bed till driven to desperation by hunger, when rushing out upon the landing-place, he found that he had only just time to dress for a late dinner.

There was one kind of mystification in which Sydney Smith shone pre-eminent,—that of which the pretended extract from an old Dutch Chronicle, quoted in his first letter to Archdeacon Singleton, is an amusing specimen. Still better was the report supplied by him to a Yorkshire paper, of the alleged trial of a farmer at the Northamptonshire Sessions for keeping a savage dog, and the sentence of imprisonment, with hard labour and private whipping, passed upon the offender. The effect, he said, was wonderful, and the reign of Cerberus ceased in the land. 'That accounts,' remarked Lord Spencer, on hearing him relate the story, 'for what has puzzled me and Althorp for many years. We never failed to attend the Sessions at Northampton, and we

never could find out how we had missed this remarkable dog case.' Even editorial dignity and credulity were sometimes ruthlessly trifled with. The publication named at the head of his article on 'Counsel for Prisoners,' had no existence except in his own creative fancy.

When Sydney Smith first settled in Yorkshire, he was in the habit of riding a good deal. About this time he writes:—'I used to think a fall from a horse dangerous, but much experience has convinced me to the contrary. I have had six falls in two years, and behaved just like the Three per Cents. when they fall,—I got up again, and am not a bit the worse for it, any more than the stock in question.' 'At a later period,' he says, 'I left off riding for the good of my family: for somehow or other my horse and I had a habit of parting company. On one occasion I found myself suddenly prostrate in the streets of York, much to the delight of the Dissenters. Another time my horse Calamity flung me over his head into a neighbouring parish as if I had been a shuttlecock, and I felt grateful it was not into a neighbouring planet.'

Charles Mathews, the elder, having had his limbs fractured two or three times by falls from gigs, vowed never to enter one again unless he was first satisfied, by ocular demonstration, that the horse would bear the sawing of the reins under his tail without kicking. Sydney Smith had an equal horror of this description of vehicle, and maintained that, as regarded the prolongation of human life, the invention of gigs had more than counterbalanced the discovery of vaccination. According to

Mr. Apperley (Nimrod), a hunting parson makes friends, a shooting parson makes enemies. Sydney Smith tells us that he gave up shooting, first, 'because I found, on trying at Lord Grey's, that the birds seemed to consider the muzzle of my gun as their safest position; secondly, because I never could help shutting my eyes when I fired my gun, so was not likely to improve; and thirdly, because, if you do shoot, the squire and the poacher both consider you as their natural enemy, and I thought it more clerical to be at peace with both.'

In an argument with a serious baronet, who objected to clerical sporting in the abstract, he stood up for angling. 'I give up fly-fishing; it is a light, volatile, dissipated pursuit. But ground-bait, with a good steady float that never bobs without a bite, is an occupation for a bishop, and in no way interferes with sermon-making.' He once discovered some tench in a pond at Sandhill Park (a seat of the Lethbridges close to Combe Florey), and kept the secret till he had caught every one of them (an exploit requiring several days), when he loudly triumphed over the fisherman of the family. Writing to Lady Grey, he says: 'His (John Grey's) refusal of the living of Sunbury convinces me that he is not fond of gudgeon-fishing. I had figured to myself you and Lord Grey, and myself, engaged in that occupation upon the river Thames.'

Lady Holland's description of a morning at Combe Florey may form a companion picture for her sketch of the arrival of the family at Foston:

'The room, an oblong, was, as I have already described, surrounded on three sides by books, and ended in a bay-

window opening into the garden: not brown, dark, dull-looking volumes, but all in the brightest bindings; for he carried his system of furnishing for gaiety even to the dress of his books.

'He would come down into this long low room in the morning like a "giant refreshed to run his course," bright and happy as the scene around him. "Thank God for Combe Florey!" he would exclaim, throwing himself into his red arm-chair, and looking round; "I feel like a bridegroom in the honeymoon." And in truth I doubt if ever bridegroom felt so joyous, or at least made others feel so joyous, as he did on these occasions. "Ring the bell, Saba;" the usual refrain, by the bye, in every pause, for he contrived to keep everybody actively employed around him, and nobody ever objected to be so employed. "Ring the bell, Saba." Enter the servant, D——. 'D——, glorify the room." This meant that the three Venetian windows of the bay were to be flung open, displaying the garden on every side, and letting in a blaze of sunshine and flowers. D—— glorifies the room with the utmost gravity, and departs. "You would not believe it," he said, "to look at him now, but D—— is a reformed Quaker. Yes, he quaked, or did quake; his brother quakes still: but D—— is now thoroughly orthodox. I should not like to be a Dissenter in his way; he is to be one of my vergers at St. Paul's some day. Lady B—— calls them my virgins. She asked me the other day, "Pray, Mr. Smith, is it true that you walk down St. Paul's with three virgins holding silver pokers before you?" I shook my head, and looked very grave, and bid her come and see. Some enemy of the Church, some Dissenter, had clearly been misleading her."

'"There now," sitting down at the breakfast table, "take a lesson of economy. You never breakfasted in a parsonage before, did you? There, you see, my china is all white, so if broken can always be renewed; the same with my plates

at dinner: did you observe my plates? every one a different pattern, some of them *sweet articles*; it was a pleasure to dine upon such a plate as I had last night. It is true, Mrs. Sydney, who is a great herald, is shocked because some of them have the arms of a royal duke or a knight of the garter on them, but that does not signify to me. My plan is to go into a china-shop and bid them show me every plate they have which does not cost more than half a crown; you see the result."

'"I think breakfast so pleasant because no one is conceited before one o'clock."

'Mrs. Marcet admired his ham. "Oh," said he, "our hams are the only true hams; yours are Shems and Japhets.'"

A good deal of this may be nonsense, as no one knew better than himself; but it is cheerful, sparkling, joy-inspiring nonsense, such as none but a good, happy, right-minded, highly-cultivated, and very clever man could talk. Rousseau, the antipodes of the rector of Combe Florey, also professed 'un goût vif pour les déjeûners. C'est le temps de la journée où nous sommes le plus tranquilles, où nous causons le plus à notre aise.' The memory of Mr. Rogers's breakfasts will last as long as that of Madame du Deffand's suppers; but the fame of colloquial meetings is commonly lowered rather than exalted by description; and we are sorry that Lady Holland has called in the aid of note-taking friends and admirers to confirm her impressions of the Combe Florey 'feasts of reason and flow of soul' by their reminiscences.

'Eloquence,' says Bolingbroke, 'must flow like a stream that is fed by an abundant spring, and not spout

forth a little frothy water on some gaudy day, and remain dry the rest of the year.' So must humour, and Sydney Smith's was so fed; yet it was seldom overpowering, and never exhausting, except by the prolonged fits of laughter which it provoked. Although in one of his letters already quoted he calls himself a diner-out, he had none of the prescriptive attributes of that now happily almost extinct tribe. He had no notion of talking for display. He talked because he could not help it: because his spirits were excited, and his mind was full. He consciously or unconsciously, too, abided by Lord Chesterfield's rule, 'Pay your own reckoning, but do not treat the whole company; this being one of the very few cases in which people do not care to be treated, everyone being fully convinced that he has wherewithal to pay.' His favourite maxim (copied from Swift) was 'take as many half-minutes as you can get, but never talk more than half a minute without pausing and giving others an opportunity to strike in.' He vowed that Buchon, a clever and amiable man of letters who talked on the opposite principle, was the identical Frenchman who murmured, as he was anxiously watching a rival, 'S'il tousse, il est perdu.'

Far from being jealous of competition, he was always anxious to dine in company with men who were able and entitled to hold their own; and he was never pleasanter than when some guest of congenial turn of mind assisted him to keep up the ball. On the occasion of the first attempt (at the writer's chambers in the Temple) to bring him and Theodore Hook together,

Lockhart arrived with the information that Hook was priming himself (as was his wont) at the Athenæum Club, with a tumbler or two of hot punch. 'Oh,' exclaimed Sydney, 'if it comes to that, let us start fair. When Mr. Hook is announced, announce Mr. Smith's punch.' When they did meet they contracted a mutual liking, and Sydney ran on with his usual flow and felicity; but poor Hook had arrived at that period of his life when his wonderful powers required a greater amount of stimulants than could be decently imbibed at an ordinary London dinner with a clergyman. He was little more than a listener, and Sydney told one of the party (the writer) that, if he had not known who Hook was, he should have taken him for a quiet, intelligent, good-natured, ordinary sort of man.

Sydney Smith almost invariably made it his special business to call out and encourage the display of any latent elements of information or agreeability in any silent, unobtrusive, or abashed member of the company. At the same time he by no means disliked mixing with what he called commonplace humdrum people, endowed with only an indistinct perception of a joke; and he rightly conceived that he had done the State good service by the invention of the 'Foolometer.'

In 1818 we find him writing to Earl Grey: 'I will send Lady Grey the news from London when I get there. I am sure she is too wise a woman not to be fond of gossiping. I am fond of it, and have some talents for it.' It formed in his opinion an excellent foundation for the more elevated order of social

intercourse; since conversation, like singing, if commenced in too high a key, is apt to get overstrained and out of tune. No one knew better how and when to turn from gay to grave. There was always plenty of bread to his sack. His intellectual larder in no respect resembled that of the Prince in the fairy tale, which contained nothing but cream tarts, with or without pepper. There was abundance of plain wholesome food to be found in Sydney's, which was frequently served up without sauce or condiment to the guest who was fortunate enough to be his companion in a ride or walk; when the coruscations of his humour were relieved, not by flashes of silence, but by the moonlight beams of good feeling and good sense.

When he stopped to give directions to his servants or labourers he was well worth listening to. On it being pointed out to him that his gardener was tearing off too many of the leaves of a vine, he told him to desist. The man, a Scotchman, looked unconvinced. 'Now, understand me,' he continued; 'you are probably right, but in this instance I don't wish you to do what is right; and as it is my vine, and there are no moral laws for pruning, you may as well do as I wish.' Sir Henry Holland's high authority is adduced in favour of Sydney's medical knowledge; but we have our doubts whether the health of either Foston or Combe Florey was improved by the indulgence of his hobby in this particular. A composition of blue-pill which he was glad to 'dart into the intestines' of any luckless wight whom he could induce to swallow it, sometimes operated in a manner which he had not anticipated. One morn-

ing, at Combe Florey, a regular practitioner from Taunton, who had been going his weekly round and was considerately employed to overlook the serious cases, came in with rather a long face and stated that an elderly woman, who had been taking the pill during several consecutive nights for the lumbago, complained that her gums were sore, and he therefore advised the discontinuance of it. A London visitor (the writer), who had tried it once, began to titter; and Sydney, after attempting a weak apology for his practice, heartily joined in the laugh, exclaiming: 'What a story you will make of this, when you next breakfast with Rogers, and how he and Luttrell will triumph in it!'

Soon afterwards he wrote to inquire about the capabilities of a medical gentleman.

'Dec. 11, 1843. Combe Florey, Taunton.

'Dear Hayward,—Do you know anything of the Esculapius of Lyme Regis? Does he march in the path of rhubarb? Can he remove a limb? Does he know his way in the bowels? Can he see in the cæcum? Can he remove a full stop in the colon? Is his practice right in the rectum? In plain prose, do you know anything about him, and is he fit for the office he is desirous to fill?

'I am here without motive, without excitement, in a state of quiet which I hate, and amongst the beauties of nature for which I have little taste. I envy you the dirt, the hurricane, and malignity in which (as all London people) you live.

'Ever truly yours,
'SYDNEY SMITH.'

'If you come to the West to see your father, or, as the

Scotch call him, your *cause*, and will bestow a day upon us, we shall be very glad to see you.'

The rapidity with which reading men, particularly critics and those who read for a purpose, get over the ground, has often astonished persons unpractised in the art. Dr. Johnson has been described as tearing out the heart of a book, and he seldom read one fairly through. Sydney Smith's mode of reading must have been equally quick, for we find him writing to Lady Grey:—'I recommend you to read Hall's, Palmer's, Fearon's, and Bradling's "Travels in America," particularly Fearon's: these four books may, with ease, be read through between breakfast and dinner.' The truth is, any one accustomed to composition, and conversant with the subject, can see at a glance whether the author has contributed anything valuable or curious to the pre-existing stock of thought or knowledge, and will fasten intuitively on the passages which contain the pith of the work. Rare are the cases in which the packing and stuffing, the beating about the bush and the amplification, do not constitute the larger half of the publication.

In this cursory fashion, he contrived to acquire a general knowledge of the recent and more popular discoveries in physical science, especially geology; and he held its leading professors in high honour, although he was wont to make them the object of a little harmless raillery. The following letter was addressed to Sir Roderick Murchison, whilst he was attending the British Association during its first meeting at Glasgow under the presidency of the Marquess of Breadalbane.

'Combe Florey, 1840.

'Dear Murchison,—Many thanks for your kind recollections of me in sending your pamphlet, which I shall read with all attention and care. My observation has been necessarily so much fixed on missions of another description, that I am hardly reconciled to zealots going out with voltaic batteries and crucibles, for the conversion of mankind, and baptizing their fellow-creatures with the mineral acids; but I will endeavour to admire, and believe in you. My real alarm for you is, that, by some late decisions of the magistrates, you come under the legal definition of *strollers*; and nothing would give me more pain than to see any of the Sections upon the mill, calculating the resistance of the air, and showing the additional quantity of flour which might be ground *in vacuo*,—each man in the meantime imagining himself a Galileo.

'Mrs. Sydney has eight distinct illnesses, and I have nine. We take something every hour, and pass the mixture from one to the other.

'About forty years ago, I stopped an infant in Lord Breadalbane's grounds, and patted his face. The nurse said, "Hold up your head, Lord Glenorchy." This was the President of your society. He seems to be acting an honourable and enlightened part in life. Pray present my respects to him and his beautiful marchioness.

'SYDNEY SMITH.

'Since writing this, I have read your Memoir,—a little too flowery, but very sensible and good.'

He was too liberal and enlightened a divine to believe that sound religion could be shaken or undermined by the diffusion of truth, and, when the cry of Moses against Murchison was raised at York, he gallantly sided with the geologist. He practised the toleration

which he preached. In his speech on the Catholic Claims, at a meeting of the clergy in the East Riding, he says: 'My excellent and respectable curate, Mr. Milestones, alarmed at the effect of the Pope upon the East Riding, has come here to oppose me; and there he stands breathing war and vengeance on the Vatican. We had some previous conversation on this subject; and, in imitation of our superiors, we agreed not to make it a cabinet question.' At this meeting he was in a minority of one.

His mode of writing may be guessed. His sentences were not painfully squeezed out, drop by drop, like Fox's, nor his proofs corrected three or four times over, like Burke's. His articles were obviously more than half composed before he proceeded to commit them to paper. But he was by no means devoid of the common sensitiveness to editorial emendation; and he more than once complains of Jeffrey for spoiling his jokes.

He was fond of good eating, and he kept an excellent table as soon as he could afford it. His well-known recipe for salad contains two lines which his friend Luttrell might have envied:

> 'Let onion atoms lurk within the bowl,
> And, half suspected, animate the whole.'

He insisted on warmth as indispensable to convivial or social enjoyment, and was wont to contend that compatibility of temperature was as necessary to domestic happiness as compatibility of temper. He liked a profusion of light, and complained that Rogers's dining-room, in which the only light was reflected from the pictures, was a place of 'darkness and gnashing of

teeth.' Amongst his personal peculiarities, it deserves to be recorded that he much preferred conversation to music, although endowed with a good ear, and that he had a strong dislike to theatres and theatrical entertainments.

The old rules of evidence should be strictly enforced as regards Sydney Smith. No hearsay versions of his sayings should be admissible. It is really too bad to have inaccurate versions of Charles Fox's well-known comment on Thurlow's countenance, Thurlow's equally familiar remark on corporations, Joseph Hume's application of the term 'allegator' to Sir Robert Peel, Lord Ellenborough's jokes on the stammering barrister and the yawning peer, with reported sayings of Luttrell, and notorious instances of the late Lord Dudley's or Mr. Bowles's absence of mind, deliberately set down and printed as specimens of Sydney Smith's conversational felicity. So long as the biographer trusts to her own resources, all generally goes right. To those who never heard him in an exuberant mood the following sample of his manner may convey a notion of it:

'Some one mentioned that a young Scotchman, who had been lately in the neighbourhood, was about to marry an Irish widow, double his age and of considerable dimensions. "Going to marry her?" he exclaimed, bursting out laughing; "going to marry her! impossible! you mean, a part of her: he could not marry her all himself. It would be a case, not of bigamy, but trigamy; the neighbourhood or the magistrates should interfere. There is enough of her to furnish wives for a whole parish. One man marry her!—it is monstrous. You might people a colony with her; or give an assembly with her; or perhaps take your morning's walk round

her, always provided there were frequent resting-places, and you were in rude health. I once was rash enough to try walking round her before breakfast, but only got half-way and gave it up exhausted. Or you might read the Riot Act and disperse her; in short, you might do anything with her but marry her." "Oh, Mr. Sydney!" said a young lady recovering from the general laugh, "did you make all that yourself?" "Yes, Lucy,"—throwing himself back in his chair and shaking with laughter; "all myself, child; all my own thunder. Do you think, when I am about to make a joke, I send for my neighbours C. and G., or consult the clerk and churchwardens upon it? But let us go into the garden." And, all laughing till we cried, without hats or bonnets, we sallied forth out of his glorified window into the garden.'

Soon after furnishing his house in Green Street, he said: 'I hate bare walls; so I cover mine, you see, with pictures. I took the advice once of two Royal Academicians, but brought their consultation to an abrupt determination by saying, Gentlemen, I forgot to mention that my highest price is five-and-thirty shillings. The public, it must be owned, treat my collection with great contempt; and even Hibbert, who has been brought up in the midst of fine pictures, and might know better, never will admire them. But look at that sea-piece, now; what would you desire more? It is true, the moon in the corner was rather dingy when I first bought it; so I had a new moon put in for half-a-crown, and now I consider it perfect.'

Speaking of the classic features of the late Lord Denman, he said it was a wonder his court was not

constantly beset with sculptors and artists engaged in studying and copying so fine a model.

Several of his jokes or oddities (as the invention of the patent armour against bodily ailments, and the tying oranges on the bay trees on the lawn) are told twice over with variations; and many of the pointed remarks, reported as conversational, will be found much better expressed in his printed letters or publications. He is made to say of one of his neighbours: 'I believe —— would die for his game. He is truly a pheasant-minded man: he revenged himself upon me by telling all the Joseph Millers he could find as my jokes.' This gentleman has certainly found effective co-operation where he had least reason to hope for it, namely, amongst the friends and admirers of his victim. Some of the most enthusiastic of these, with all their cultivation and accomplishment, were notoriously endowed with the faintest possible perception of humour, and were really attracted to him by his understanding and his cheerfulness.

The Americans were very angry at his Repudiation Letters, and their Press accused him in the coarsest language of being exclusively actuated by interested motives. This was a mistake. His loss did not exceed 50*l*., and the line he took may be sufficiently accounted for by his instinctive hatred of dishonesty, and his fears lest free institutions should be discredited. There was more sorrow than anger in his concluding remark: 'And now having eased my soul of its indignation, and sold my stock at 40 per cent. discount, I sulkily retire

from the subject, with a fixed intention of lending no more money to free and enlightened republics; but of employing my money henceforth in buying up Abyssinian bonds, and purchasing into the Turkish Fours, or the Tunis Three-and-a-half per Cent. Funds.'

He was fond of the society of cultivated Americans, although he was wont to complain of their slow perception of humour, and their touchiness when they suspected the laugh to be at their expense. Once, when a former representative of the United States flared up at an unlucky doubt expressed whether canvas-back ducks were not a 'humbug,' Sydney turned round to the sceptical gourmand and exclaimed, 'Now, you are in for it. You had better have trampled upon their flag.' It was upon this occasion he said: 'I had intended going to America; but my parishioners held a meeting, and came to a resolution that they could not trust me with the canvas-back ducks; and I felt they were right, so gave up the project.' He would relate with great glee how a celebrated Yankee critic, Jared Sparks, claimed fellowship with him as one of the craft, and gravely asked his opinion whether he did not think pepper and vinegar the essential ingredients of a review. His first reflection after his introduction to Webster (a slow, deliberate talker, whose eminent qualities are acknowledged in the correspondence) was that time could not be valuable in America. On more intimate acquaintance, he said, 'Daniel Webster strikes me much like a steam-engine in trowsers.'

On receiving some American papers taking his side of the Repudiation question, he wrote:

'Bowood, Jan. 8, 1844.

'Dear Hayward,—Many thanks for your good nature. From the opposite principle, the Dean has sent me all the American abuse. They call me a minor canon eighty-five years of age, an ass, and a Xantippe, mistaking evidently the sex of that termagant person. The truth is that neither Macaulay nor Croker are like the Falls of Niagara. Macaulay is always rising instead of falling, and Croker has ceased to fall because he can fall no lower than he has done already. We have had a very agreeable party here. I return on Tuesday. 'Ever truly yours,

'SYDNEY SMITH.'

He and Mr. Croker were always at daggers drawn, and a reconciliation dinner, attempted by Parke (Lord Wensleydale) made matters worse. He often alluded with evident complacency to the spread of his fame on the other side of the Atlantic, as when he says, 'I have heard that one of the American Ministers in this country was so oppressed by the numbers of his countrymen applying for introductions, that he was obliged at last to set up sham Sydney Smiths and false Macaulays. But they can't have been good counterfeits; for a most respectable American, on his return home, was heard describing Sydney Smith as a thin, grave, dull old fellow; and as to Macaulay (said he) I never met a more silent man in my life.' Sophie Arnault actually played off a similar trick on a party of Parisian fine ladies and gentlemen who had expressed a wish to meet Rousseau. She dressed up a theatrical tailor who bore some likeness to the author of 'Emile,' and placed him next to herself at dinner, with instructions not to open his mouth except to eat and

drink. Unluckily he opened it too often for the admission of champagne, and began talking in a style befitting the *coulisses*; but this only added to the delusion, and the next day the noble faubourg rang with praises of the easy sparkling pleasantry of the philosopher.

According to another well-authenticated anecdote (which Professor Wilson was fond of telling), there was a crazy fellow at Edinburgh, who called himself Doctor, fancied that he had once been on the point of obtaining the chair of Moral Philosophy, and professed the most extravagant admiration for a celebrated poet (Wordsworth). Some wag suggested that he should pay a visit to his idol. He did so, and stayed two days, indulging his monomania, but simultaneously gratifying his host's prodigious appetite for adulation; and the poet uniformly spoke of him as one of the most intelligent and well-informed Scotchmen he had ever known. When this story was told to Sydney Smith, he offered the narrator (the writer) five shillings for the exclusive right to it for a week. The bargain was struck, and the money paid down.

With all his boundless fertility of fancy, he delighted in a good story, and fully exemplified his own remarks in the lecture on Wit and Humour. 'If I say a good thing to-day, and repeat it again to-morrow in another company, the flash of to-day is as much like the flash of to-morrow as the flash of one musket is like the flash of another: but if I tell a humorous story, there are a thousand little diversities in my voice, manner, language, and gestures, which render it rather a dif-

ferent thing from what it was before, and infuse a tinge of novelty into the repeated narrative.' A story that seemed to haunt him for weeks, was one of a tame magpye in a church, that suddenly descended on the reading-desk and endeavoured to fly off with the sermon; and of the desperate struggle that ensued between the bird and the preacher, 'the congregation all in favour of the pye.'

There was another which he seldom failed to repeat whenever one of his most agreeable neighbours, whose Christian name was Ambrose, was announced. 'Do you know how they pronounce Ambrose in Yorkshire? They turn it into Amorous. Once at Foston, I was told Amorous Phillips was waiting to speak to me in the hall. "Let him wait," said I,—deceived by this manner of pronunciation, which I heard for the first time,—"but do not let any of the maid-servants go near him."'

Many discriminating tributes to Sydney Smith's worth and talents are included in this biography, but Mrs. Austin's preface to the second volume renders all the rest superfluous. It is a concise, convincing, impartial, and affectionate summary of her lamented friend's leading merits and distinguishing qualities. It hardly requires an addition, and certainly does not admit of improvement. After justly remarking that, many of the giants he combated being not only slain but forgotten, the very completeness of his victory tends to efface from the minds of the present generation the extent of their obligations to him, she asks, 'What other private gentleman of our day, unconnected with

Parliament, without rank or fortune, has been able by a few pages from his pen to electrify the country, as he did by his letters to the Americans? or to fight single-handed against the combined power of the ministry and of the dignitaries of the Church—a battle in which he carried public opinion with him?'—or, we beg leave to add, to alter the whole complexion of a controversy on a subject apparently so exhausted as the Ballot?

At the same time, we cannot quite agree with Mrs. Austin as to his style; and Sir Henry Holland's remarks, which she quotes approvingly, must be read with a few grains of allowance:—'If,' writes Sir Henry, 'Mr. Sydney Smith had not been the greatest and most brilliant of wits, he would have been the most remarkable man of his time for a sound and vigorous understanding and great reasoning powers; and if he had not been distinguished for these, he would have been the most eminent and the *purest* writer of English.'

Since we are on the chapter of style, we may be pardoned for suggesting that Sir Henry's obvious meaning is not expressed with his usual precision. But he clearly intended to assert that Sydney Smith, besides being the most brilliant of wits, and possessing great reasoning powers, was no less remarkable for the excellence of his style. Now a good style is one which can be safely recommended for general use; and in saying that Sydney Smith's was not, in this sense at least, a good style, we say no more than is indisputably true of Burke's, Gibbon's, or Johnson's. We are not denying

that Sydney Smith's style was admirably fitted for his purpose, and we could cite passages of high eloquence which are unexceptionable in point of composition. His sermons, which are mostly free from mannerism, prove that he could combine purity and correctness with force of language when he thought fit. But his humorous writings are often deficient in ease, smoothness, grace, rhythm, and purity, because he constantly aimed at effect by startling contrasts, by the juxtaposition of incongruous images or epithets, or by the use of odd-sounding words and strange compounds of Greek and Latin derivation. Thus he describes a preacher wiping his face with his 'cambric *sudarium*,' and asks, 'Why this *holoplexia* on sacred occasions alone?' A weak and foolish man is 'anserous and asinine.' Dr. Parr's wig is the *μέγα θαῦμα* of barbers. Mr. Grote is quizzed for supposing that England is to be governed by 'political acupuncturation,' and told that his concealed democrat, doomed to lead a long life of lies between every election, 'must do this not only *eundo*, in his calm and prudential state, but *redeundo*, from the market, warmed with beer and expanded by alcohol.'

This is certainly not pure English: it is not even popular writing, like Defoe's, or Swift's, or Cobbett's. It is *caviare* to the general, and would require to be interpreted for the benefit of the ladies and the country gentlemen; that is, if the country gentlemen did not now constitute one of the most highly educated classes of our society. The art of true criticism demands that we should subject ourselves to a strict self-examination,

and that we should analyse the causes and sources of our impressions, favourable or unfavourable. Let Sir Henry Holland do this, and he will admit that he has confounded the style with the man, and that Sydney Smith sometimes formed a striking exception to Buffon's famous dogma, *Le style c'est l'homme.* In his case the man was always natural, simple, and essentially English,—the style was often forced, factitious, composite, and (to borrow his own word) cosmopolite.

What Sir Henry Holland says of the suddenness and unexpectedness of his manner is just. His review of Madame d'Epinay's 'Memoirs' begins thus:

'There used to be in Paris, under the ancient *régime*, a few women of brilliant talents, who violated all the common duties of life, and gave very pleasant little suppers. Among these supped and sinned Madame d'Epinay, the friend and companion of Rousseau, Diderot, Grimm, Holbach, and many other literary persons of distinction of that period. Her principal lover was Grimm; with whom was deposited, written in feigned names, the history of her life. Grimm died—his secretary sold the history—the feigned names have been exchanged for the real ones—and her works now appear abridged in three volumes octavo.'

An excellent judge of composition (Milman) has spoken of the increased vigour of style and boldness of illustration in Sydney Smith's writings as he advanced in years. This is most observable in the letters, the earliest of which, we frankly own, have disappointed us, although they contain ample confirmation (were any needed) of his soundness of principle, his undeviating rectitude of purpose, his affectionate disposition, his

happy temper, and his warm heart. The shortest are the best. The longest, we believe, cost him no effort, but some of them read as if they did, and we would gladly exchange them for a collection of the notes he dashed off in the daily commerce of life. Thus in one excusing himself from keeping an engagement to sup in the Temple:

'Charles Street, May 18, 1836.

'My dear Hayward,—There is no more harm in talking between eleven and one, than between nine and eleven. The Temple is as good as Charles Street. The ladies are the most impregnable, and the gentlemen the most unimpeachable, of the sex; but still I have a feeling of the wickedness of supping in the Temple; my delicate and irritable virtue is alarmed, and I recede.

'Ever yours, S. S.'

The following, printed in the selection, are thoroughly characteristic:

'Munden House, Friday 11, 1841.

'Dear Milnes,—I will not receive you on these terms, but postpone you for safer times. I cannot blame you; but seriously, dinners are destroyed by the inconveniences of a free Government. I have filled up your place, and bought your book.

'SYDNEY SMITH.'

'May 14, 1842.

'My dear Dickens,—I accept your obliging invitation conditionally. If I am invited by any man of greater genius than yourself, or one by whose works I have been more completely interested, I will repudiate you, and dine with the more splendid phenomenon of the two.

'Ever yours sincerely,

'SYDNEY SMITH.'

'July 4, 1843.

'My dear Lord Mahon,—I am only half-recovered from a violent attack of gout in the knee, and I could not bear the confinement of dinner, without getting up and walking between the courses, or thrusting my foot on somebody else's chair, like the Archbishop of Dublin. For these reasons, I have been forced for some time, and am still forced, to decline dinner engagements. I should, in a sounder state, have had great pleasure in accepting the very agreeable party you are kind enough to propose to me; but I shall avail myself, in the next campaign, of your kindness. I consider myself as well acquainted with Lady Mahon and yourself, and shall hope to see you here, as well as elsewhere. Pray present my benediction to your charming wife, who I am sure would bring any plant in the garden into full flower by looking at it, and smiling upon it. Try the experiment from mere curiosity.

'Ever yours, SYDNEY SMITH.'

The following is a sample of his more thoughtful epistles. It is addressed to his old friend Lord Murray:

'Green Street, June 4, 1843.

'My dear Murray,—I should be glad to hear something of your life and adventures, and more particularly so, as I learn you have no intention of leaving Edinburgh for London this season.

'Mrs. Sydney and I have been remarkably well, and are so at present; why, I cannot tell. I am getting very old in years, but do not feel that I have become so in constitution. My locomotive powers at seventy-three are abridged, but my animal spirits do not desert me. I am become rich. My youngest brother died suddenly, leaving behind him 100,000*l.* and no will. A third of this, therefore, fell to my share, and puts me at my ease for my few remaining years. After buying into the Consols and the Reduced, I read Seneca "On

the Contempt of Wealth!" What intolerable nonsense! I heard your *éloge* from Lord Lansdowne when I dined with him, and I need not say how heartily I concurred in it. Next to me sat Lord Worsley, whose enclosed letter affected me, and very much pleased me. I answered it with sincere warmth. Pray return me the paper. Did you read my American Petition, and did you approve it?

. . . . . .

'Why don't they talk over the virtues and excellences of Lansdowne? There is no man who performs the duties of life better, or fills a higher station in a more becoming manner. He is full of knowledge, and eager for its acquisition. His remarkable politeness is the result of good nature, regulated by good sense. He looks for talents and qualities among all ranks of men, and adds them to his stock of society, as a botanist does his plants; and while other aristocrats are yawning among Stars and Garters, Lansdowne is refreshing his soul with the fancy and genius which he has found in odd places, and gathered to the marbles and pictures of his palace. Then he is an honest politician, a wise statesman, and has a philosophic mind; he is very agreeable in conversation, and is a man of an unblemished life. I shall take care of him in my Memoirs!

'Remember me very kindly to the *maximus minimus* (Lord Jeffrey), and to the Scotch Church. I have urged my friend the Bishop of Durham to prepare kettles of soup for the seceders, who will probably be wandering in troops over our Northern Counties.

'Ever your sincere friend,

'SYDNEY SMITH.'

Without carrying the taste so far as Tieck, whose Shakspeare readings and *soirées* at Dresden boasted about four women to one man, Sydney Smith had a marked predilection for female society. The letters

selected for publication were principally addressed to ladies; the Countess Grey, the late Lady Holland, Mrs. Meynell of Temple Newsham, Mrs. Grote, and Miss Georgiana Harcourt (now Mrs. Malcolm), being amongst the most favoured of his fair correspondents. The letters which passed between him and the Dowager Countess of Morley are capital. She had more of his peculiar humour, buoyancy of spirit, fertile fancy, and unaffected cordiality than any other of his contemporaries, male or female; and the charm of her merriment was ineffably enhanced by feminine refinement and grace. Her death is the greatest loss sustained by English society since it lost him. In the following playful competition of humour, their similarity and their congeniality in their sportive moods are obvious:

[No date.]

'Dear Lady Morley,—Pray understand me rightly: I do not give the Bluecoat theory as an established fact, but as a highly probable conjecture; look at the circumstances. At a very early age young Quakers disappear; at a very early age the Coat-boys are seen; at the age of seventeen or eighteen young Quakers are again seen; at the same age the Coat-boys disappear: who has ever heard of a Coat-man? The thing is utterly unknown in natural history. Upon what other evidence does the migration of the grub into the aurelia rest? After a certain number of days the grub is no more seen, and the aurelia flutters over his relics. That such a prominent fact should have escaped our naturalists is truly astonishing; I had long suspected it, but was afraid to come out with a speculation so bold, and now mention it as protected and sanctioned by you.

'Dissection would throw great light upon the question; and if our friend —— would receive two boys into his house

about the time of their changing their coats, great service would be rendered to the cause.

'Our friend Lord Grey, not remarkable for his attention to natural history, was a good deal struck with the novelty and ingenuity of the hypothesis. I have ascertained that the young Bluecoat infants are fed with drab-coloured pap, which looks very suspicious. More hereafter on this interesting subject. Where real science is to be promoted, I will make no apology to your Ladyship for this intrusion.

'Yours truly,

'SYDNEY SMITH.'

[No date.]

'Had I received your letter,' she replies, 'two days since, I should have said your arguments and theory were perfectly convincing, and that the most obstinate sceptic must have yielded to them; but I have come across a person in that interval who gives me information which puts us all at sea again. That the Bluecoat boy should be the larva of the Quaker in Great Britain is possible, and even probable, but we must take a wider view of the question; and here, I confess, I am bewildered by doubts and difficulties. The Bluecoat is an indigenous animal—not so the Quaker; and now be so good as to give your whole mind to the facts I have to communicate. I have seen and talked much with Sir R. Ker Porter on this interesting subject. He has travelled over the whole habitable globe, and has penetrated with a scientific and scrutinising eye into regions hitherto unexplored by civilised man; and yet *he* has never seen a Quaker baby. He has lived for years in Philadelphia (the national nest of Quakers); he has roamed up and down Broadways and lengthways in every nook and corner of Pennsylvania; and yet he never saw a Quaker baby; and what is new and most striking, never did he see a Quaker lady in a situation which gave hope that a Quaker baby might be seen here-

after. This is a stunning fact, and involving the question in such impenetrable mystery as will, I fear, defy even your sagacity, acuteness, and industry to elucidate. But let us not be checked and cast down; truth is the end and object of our research. Let us not bate one jot of heart and hope, but still bear up, and steer our course right onward.

'Yours most truly,

'F. MORLEY.'

It would be difficult to find a more pleasing specimen of his letters to ladies than the following to Lady Dufferin (*née* Sheridan):

'Combe Florey [no date.]

'I am just beginning to get well from that fit of gout, at the beginning of which you were charitable enough to pay me a visit, and I said—the same Providence which inflicts gout, creates Dufferins! We must take the good and the evils of life.

'I am charmed, I confess, with the beauty of this country. I hope some day you will be charmed with it too. It banished, however, every Arcadian notion to see Poodle Byng walk in at the gate to-day. I seemed to be transported instantly to Piccadilly, and the innocence went out of me.

'I hope the process of furnishing goes on well. Attend, I pray you, to the proper selection of an easy-chair, where you may cast yourself down in the weariness and distresses of life, with the absolute certainty that every joint of the human frame will receive all the comfort which can be derived from easy position and soft materials: then the glass, on which your eyes are so often fixed, knowing that you have the great duty imposed on the Sheridans, of looking well. You may depend upon it, happiness depends mainly on these little things.

'I hope you remain in perfect favour with Rogers, and that you are not omitted in any of the dress breakfast parties.

Remember me to the Norton: tell her I am glad to be sheltered from her beauty by the insensibility of age; that I shall not live to see its decay, but die with that unfaded image before my eyes; but don't make a mistake, and deliver the message to Lady Davy instead of your sister.

'I remain, dear Lady Dufferin, very sincerely yours,

'SYDNEY SMITH.'

In a letter dated Paris, June 29, 1844, to M. Eugène Robin, who had applied for some particulars of his life with a view to a biographical notice, he writes:

'I am seventy-four years of age, and being Canon of St. Paul's in London and rector of a parish in the country, my time is equally divided between town and country. I am living among the best society of the metropolis, and at ease in my circumstances: in tolerable health, a mild Whig, a tolerating Churchman, and much given to laughing, talking, and noise. I dine with the rich in London, and physic the poor in the country: passing from the sauces of Dives to the sores of Lazarus. I am upon the whole a happy man, have found the world an entertaining world, and am thankful to Providence for the part allotted to me in it.'

We had thoughts of attempting, with the aid of Thackeray's Lectures, to draw a parallel between Sydney Smith and the other leading English humourists; but comparisons are proverbially odious, and in a case like the present they would be both unjust and inconclusive. Sydney Smith stands alone: none but himself can be his parallel; and he is the first in his line, although his line may not be the first. He possessed the faculty of simplifying and popularising reason and argument in a way which must be pronounced inimitable, and during

forty years he uniformly exerted it for noble and useful ends. He weeded out a mass of noxious errors, and he placed a number of valuable truths and principles in new and striking points of view, thereby adding incalculably to their exchangeable value and beneficial influence. The good he has done in this way cannot be measured by what passes current, or is ticketed, as his; for so fertile was his mind that thoughts and images fell from him and were picked up and appropriated by others, like the carelessly set jewels which dropped from Buckingham's dress at the Court of Anne of Austria. He seldom came into society without naturally and easily taking the lead, as, beyond all question, the most agreeable, sensible, and instructive guest and companion that the oldest person living could remember.

These are his titles to the celebrity which still attaches to his name, but unluckily they sound transitory, perishable, and inappreciable when contrasted with the claims of the first-class humourists to the undisturbed enjoyment of their immortality. Each of these has produced at least one standard work, which will rank as an English classic so long as the English language endures. Sydney Smith is similarly situated in this respect to what Swift would be if he had never written 'The Tale of a Tub' or 'Gulliver's Travels.' But if the Canon of St. Paul's was inferior to the Dean of St. Patrick's as a writer, he was superior as a moralist and a man. The prime of his life was not wasted in the barren and abortive struggles of faction. His temper was not soured by disappointment, nor his heart corroded by misanthropy. He was not like the

scathed elm which had begun to wither at the top. His intellect retained to the last its original brightness; and he died in the fulness of years, with glowing affections and unimpaired faculties, surrounded by all that should accompany old age.

Suffering from languor in the autumn of 1844, he said: 'I feel so weak both in body and mind that I verily believe, if the knife were put into my hand, I should not have strength or energy enough to slide it into a Dissenter.' Complaining of the low diet to which he was subjected, he said to General Fox: 'Ah, Charles, I wish I were allowed even the wing of a roasted butterfly.'

> 'And sometimes with the wisest and the best,
> Till e'en the scaffold echoes with the jest—'[1]

When Murchison was admitted to his bedside shortly before his death, he took off his nightcap and (in allusion to the Moses and Murchison controversy) waved it over his head, exclaiming, 'Murchison for ever!'

Almost the last act of his life was bestowing a small living (a piece of patronage attached to his stall) on a poor, worthy, and friendless clergyman, who entreated to be allowed to see him. 'Then he must not thank me; I am too weak to bear it.' The clergyman entered, received a few words of advice, pressed an extended hand, and blessed the death-bed.

Sydney Smith died on the 22nd of February, 1845.

[1] *The Corsair*; referring to Sir Thomas More's joke on his beard, and Anne Boleyn's on the slenderness of her neck.

SAMUEL ROGERS.

(FROM THE EDINBURGH REVIEW, JULY, 1856.)

Recollections of the Table Talk of SAMUEL ROGERS; *to which is added Porsoniana.* London: 1856.

FOR more than half a century a small house in a quiet nook of London has been the recognised abode of taste, and the envied resort of wit, beauty, learning, and genius. There, surrounded by the choicest treasures of art, and in a light reflected from Guidos and Titians, have sat and mingled in familiar converse the most eminent poets, painters, actors, artists, critics, travellers, historians, warriors, orators, and statesmen of two generations. Under that roof celebrities of all sorts, matured or budding, and however contrasted in genius or pursuit, met as on the table land where (according to D'Alembert) Archimedes and Homer may stand on a perfect footing of equality. The man of mind was introduced to the man of action, and modest merit which had yet its laurels to win, was first brought acquainted with the patron who was to push its fortunes, or with the hero whose name sounded like a trumpet tone. It was in that dining-room that Erskine told the story of his first brief, and Grattan

that of his last duel: that the 'Iron Duke' described Waterloo as a 'battle of giants:' that Chantrey, placing his hand on a mahogany pedestal, said, 'Mr. Rogers, do you remember a workman at five shillings a day who came in at that door to receive your orders for this work? I was that workman.' It was there, too, that Byron's intimacy with Moore commenced over the famous mess of potatoes and vinegar: that Madame de Staël, after a triumphant argument with Mackintosh, was (as recorded by Byron) 'well ironed' by Sheridan: that Sydney Smith, at dinner with Walter Scott, Campbell, Moore, Wordsworth, and Washington Irving, declared that he and Irving, if the only prose-writers, were not the only prosers in the company.

It was through that window, opening to the floor and leading through the garden to the Park, that the host started with Sheridan's gifted granddaughter on 'The Winter's Walk' which she has so gracefully and feelingly commemorated. It was in the library above that Wordsworth, holding up the original contract for the copyright of 'Paradise Lost' (1600 copies for 5*l.*), proved to his own entire satisfaction that solid fame was in an inverse ratio to popularity; whilst Coleridge, with his finger upon the parchment deed by which Dryden agreed for the translation of the Æneid, expatiated on the advantages which would have accrued to literature, if 'glorious John' had selected the Iliad and left Virgil to Pope. Whilst these and similar scenes are passing, we can fancy the host murmuring his well-known lines:

Be mine to listen; pleased but not elate,
Ever too modest or too proud to rate
Myself by my companions, self-compelled
To earn the station that in life I held.'

This house, rich as it was in varied associations, was only completed in 1801 or 1802; but the late owner's intimacy with men and women of note goes back to a long antecedent period. He had been, some years before, proposed at Johnson's club—*the* club, as it is denominated still—by Fox, seconded by Windham, and (as he fully believed) blackballed by Malone. He had met Condorcet at Lafayette's table in 1789. In the course of a single Sunday at Edinburgh in the same eventful year, he had breakfasted with Robertson, heard *him* preach in the forenoon and Blair in the afternoon, drunk tea with the Piozzis, and supped with Adam Smith.

There is surely something more in this position than the extraordinary prolongation of human life, or than its utility as a connecting link between two or three generations,—the point of view in which hitherto it has been almost exclusively considered. It leads naturally and necessarily to reflections on the state of our society, especially in relation to its literary, artistic, and intellectual elements, during the last seventy years; and we feel eager to profit by the experience and sagacity of a nonogenarian who had enjoyed such ample opportunities for appreciating mankind. Fortunately Mr. Rogers's mental habits and tendencies strongly disposed and qualified him for turning his length of years to good account. His writings teem with maxims of

worldly wisdom, enforced or illustrated by remarkable incidents; and his conversation was replete with anecdotes selected for the sake of the light they threw on manners, the trains of thought they suggested, or the moral they involved.

What has been printed of his 'table talk' is very far from being in keeping with his character or on a par with his fame. Indeed, those who form their opinion from such records as the volume before us may be excused for attributing the assiduous court paid him to the caprice of fashion; whilst others, with better materials for judgment, will haply account for the phenomenon by the felicitous combination of long life, ample means, cultivated taste, refined hospitality, and poetic celebrity in one man. Whichever party, the detractors or the admirers, may turn out right, the critical analysis of his life and writings which must precede any honest attempt to adjudicate upon his reputation, cannot fail to be highly instructive; nor will it be found wanting in the leading attractions of literary biography. We, therefore, propose to review the principal incidents and performances of a life extending over ninety-two of the most exciting and eventful years of the world's history.

Samuel Rogers was born at Newington Green, on the 30th July, 1763. He was one of a family of six children, three sons and three daughters; he was the third son. The father was an opulent banker, head of the firm of Rogers, Olding, and Co., in Freeman's Court, Cornhill. In 1811 the business was transferred to 29, Clement's Lane, Lombard Street, where it is now car-

ried on (1856), under the name of Olding, Sharpe, and Co. Prior to his marriage, he was a member of the Church of England; but the influence of his wife (who claimed descent from one of the ejected ministers *temp.* Charles II.), speedily effected his conversion to her own creed, the Unitarian; and by the time Samuel was old enough to understand or be moved by such things, the whole family were in regular attendance on the ministry of the celebrated Dr. Price, the adversary of Burke.

The relative importance of the principal Dissenting bodies has undergone so sensible a diminution of late years, that it may be difficult for the present generation to form a just estimate of the eminence and influence of the nonconformist community in question. Yet its annals are rich in literary illustration. The names of Defoe, Dr. Watts, Dr. Price, Dr. Rees, Mrs. Barbauld, and Dr. Aikin, with others by no means undistinguished, are indelibly associated with the congregation of Newington Green; which still flourishes under the ministry of the Rev. Dr. Cromwell (of the Protector's family), and still comprises most of the primitive and highly respectable connexions of the banker-poet. He was undeniably indebted to his Dissenting friends for his first introduction to celebrated people in England, Scotland, and France; nor was the tie which bound him to them altogether dissolved by his excursions into the regions of orthodoxy and fashion. He was a trustee of the Newington Presbyterian Meeting-House from 1790 to his death—a period of sixty-five years; and when the Dissenters' Chapel Bill was before Parliament, he signed a petition in favour of it in that capacity.

According to his own account, Samuel Rogers had every reason to congratulate himself on his parentage, paternal and maternal. He was confessedly referring to himself when he wrote (in 'Italy'):

> 'What though his ancestors, early or late,
> Were not ennobled by the breath of kings:
> Yet in his veins was running at his birth
> The blood of those most eminent of old,
> For wisdom, virtue—those who would renounce
> The things of this world for their conscience' sake.'

His mother, of whom he uniformly spoke as an amiable and very handsome woman, sedulously inculcated kindness and gentleness; whilst his father, who lived till 1793, gave him a good education suited to his intended mode of life, put him in the way of making a fortune, and carefully refrained from thwarting him in his inclinations or pursuits, although these must frequently have jarred against the nonconformist citizen's notion of the fitness of things. On seeing his son taking to poetry and fine company, the old man must have felt like the hen who sees the duckling, which she has hatched as a bird of her own feather, suddenly taking to water; and in his heart he probably agreed with Lord Ellenborough, who on hearing that a new poem ('The Pleasures of Memory') had just been published by a young banker, exclaimed, 'If old Gozzy'—alluding to the head of the firm with which he banked—'ever so much as says a good thing,—let alone writing,—I will close my account with him the next morning.'

In early boyhood, the future poet's impulse was to

start off the course in a diametrically opposite direction. When he and his brothers were called in and asked by the father what professions they wished to follow, Samuel avowed his predilection for that of a preacher; a choice which he explained by his admiration for Dr. Price. 'He was our neighbour of Newington Green, and would often drop in to spend the evening with us, in his dressing-gown: he would talk and read the Bible to us till he sent us to bed in a frame of mind as heavenly as his own. He lived much in the society of Lord Lansdowne and other people of rank, and his manners were extremely polished.' If the child be father to the man, we must be pardoned for suspecting that the mundane advantages of the divine had at least as much to do with the influence which he exercised over his young admirer, as the truths divine that came mended from his tongue.

The chief part, if not the whole, of Rogers's formal and regular education was received at a Dissenting school at Hackney, where he learned Latin enough to enable him to read the easier Latin classics with facility. By the time he quitted it, he had got rid of his pulpit aspirations, and he is not recorded to have manifested any marked reluctance to his destination when he was placed in the paternal counting-house, with the view of being in due course admitted a member of the firm. He began the serious business of life with the good sense and prudence which never left him; although he was constantly exposed to temptations to which most men of poetical or susceptible temperament would have succumbed. When his solid comforts and his well under-

stood interests were involved, the Dalilahs of fame and fashion, of vanity and sensibility, exhausted their arts on him in vain. He kept his gaze steadily fixed on the main chance. Even when he set up as a poet, he could honestly say, 'I left no calling for this idle trade—no duty broke;' and he continued laying the foundations of his ideal edifice of social enjoyment and prosperity, with a patience and precision worthy of the most painstaking and methodical of economists and calculators.

It was his favourite speculation, that the greatest command of worldly happiness was attainable by one who, beginning low on the social ladder, should mount gradually and regularly to the top. It has been invidiously objected that this sounds very like the career of a successful tuft-hunter. But Rogers insisted that every step in the ascent should be won honourably, and that the sustained gratification was to arise from recognised merit, and would be poisoned by the smallest admixture of conscious unworthiness. Fortunately, he has himself explained and amplified his theory, in one of the most striking passages of his 'Italy':—

'All, wherever in the scale,
Have—be they high or low, or rich or poor,
Inherit they a sheep-hook or a sceptre—
Much to be grateful for; but most has he,
Born in that middle sphere, that temperate zone,
Where Knowledge lights his lamp. . . .
What men most covet,—wealth, distinction, power,
Are baubles nothing worth, that only serve
To rouse us up, as children in the schools
Are roused up to exertion. *The reward*
Is in the race we run, not in the prize;
And they, the few, that have it ere they earn it,

Having, by favour or inheritance,
These dangerous gifts placed in their idle hands,
And all that should await on worth well-tried,
All in the glorious days of old reserved
For manhood most mature or reverend age,
Know not, nor ever can, the generous pride
That glows in him who on himself relies,
Entering the lists of life.'

Thirsting for distinction, he hurried into the lists without adequate preparation, and with ill-fitting and borrowed arms. Most young aspirants to distinction instinctively copy the model that caprice or accident has made popular; and indiscriminately adopt, to the best of their ability, the vice or virtue, the folly or wisdom, the style of dress or the style of writing, that is in vogue. When Rogers started as an author, he was not exempt from this almost universal weakness; and to explain his poetical development, we must cast a retrospective glance over the poetical productions and literary tendencies of the generation in which he was trained up.

The period in question was the Augustan age of historians and novelists; for within it flourished, in fulness of reputation, Hume, Robertson, Gibbon, Fielding, Smollett, Richardson, and Goldsmith. The rich mine opened by the essayists, beginning with the 'Tatler' and the 'Spectator,' had been worked out, and was virtually abandoned after the termination of the 'Idler' in 1757; whilst a cold shade was flung over poetry by the name and memory of Pope. No school has practically proved more depressing to originality than his,—despite (perhaps by reason) of his own exquisite fancy,

and notwithstanding the encouragement to erratic courses held out in the familiar couplet—

> 'From vulgar bounds with brave disorder part,
> And snatch a grace beyond the reach of art.'

Nor have many schools retained their influence longer; for Crabbe was wittily described as 'Pope in worsted stockings;' and the spell was not completely broken until the 19th century, when Sir Walter Scott inspired the taste for metrical tales of passion and adventure.[1] Collins and Gray, emboldened by 'Alexander's Feast' and the 'Ode on St. Cecilia's Day,' produced some fine lyrical pieces, as the 'Ode to the Passions' and 'The Bard;' but for more than fifty years after the death of the bard of Twickenham, English poetry ran almost exclusively in the didactic, descriptive, or elegiac line, with an occasional digression into satire. Rogers's avowed favourites were Gray and Goldsmith; and his preference has been justified by posterity. 'I used,' he said, 'to take a pocket edition of Gray's Poems with me every morning during my walks to my father's banking-house, where I was a clerk, and read them by the way. I can repeat them all.' On another occasion he exclaimed, 'What pleasure I felt on being told that Este (Parson Este) had said of me, "A child of Goldsmith, sir."' This must have been after the publica-

[1] Coleridge's admirers were wont to maintain that Scott owed more than he cared to own to *Christabel*; but, by a parity of reasoning, Coleridge may be accused of owing more than he cared to own to *Faust*. Byron and Scott concurred in declaring *The Vanity of Human Wishes* the finest poem of the eighteenth century after Pope.

tion of the 'Pleasures of Memory:' for Rogers, having first tried his strength in prose, began his poetical career by taking for his prototype the one (Gray) of his two favourites whose genius was least in harmony with his own, and by imbuing himself with the spirit of what must have been to him the least congenial of that one's productions.

The to all agreeable, to many intoxicating, sensation of first seeing oneself in print, was experienced by Rogers in 1781, when he contributed eight essays, under the title of *The Scribbler*, to 'The Gentleman's Magazine,'—the same which, under the editorship of Sylvanus Urban (Cave) had been the repository of the earliest efforts of Johnson in the same walk. 'He told me,' says Boswell, 'that when he first saw St. John's Gate, the place where that deservedly popular miscellany was originally printed, he beheld it with reverence.' Probably it was Johnsonian influence that gave their peculiar form to Rogers's first attempts at authorship; for the great lexicographer was amongst the idols of his youth. 'My friend Maltby and I,' he used to relate, 'had a strong desire to see Dr. Johnson; and we determined to call upon him and introduce ourselves. We accordingly proceeded to his house in Bolt Court; and I had my hand on the knocker, when our courage failed us, and we retreated. Many years afterwards I mentioned this circumstance to Boswell, who said, "What a pity you did not go boldly in! he would have received you with all kindness."'

Rogers commonly followed up this anecdote with another of the advice he gave, instead of a letter of in-

troduction, to a young friend who was going to Birmingham, and had a similar desire to see Dr. Parr. The advice was to be collected from the result. 'Well, what did you do?' was my first question to the traveller on his return. 'Exactly as you told me. I knocked boldly at the door, and asked for Dr. Parr. I was shown into a parlour on the ground floor by a servant-maid. When the Doctor appeared, I looked steadily at him for a moment, and then said, 'Dr. Parr, I have taken an inexcusable liberty, and I cannot complain if you order me to be kicked out of your house. On seeing your name upon the door, I could not make up my mind to pass the house of the greatest man in Europe without seeing him. I knocked, was admitted, and here I am!' The Doctor seized me by both hands in a kind of transport of welcome, fairly danced me up and down the room, and ended by keeping me to dinner on a roast shoulder of mutton.'

Rogers's admiration of Johnson never extended to his style, and the most remarkable features of 'The Scribbler' are the correctness and ease of the language. All the essays are commonplace enough in point of thought and conception, nor would it be difficult to specify the very 'Ramblers' or 'Idlers' which the writer had in his mind's eye whilst composing them; but the one on 'Fashion' is written with a freedom and rhythmical flow which are rarely found in essayists of eighteen:—

'Whether she (Fashion) heightened with a pencil the vermilion of her cheek, or clothed her limbs with a tight or flowing vest; whether she collected her ringlets in a knot,

or suffered them to hang negligently on her shoulders; whether she shook the dice, waked the lyre, or filled the sparkling glass,—she was imitated by her votaries, who vied with each other in obsequiousness and reverence. All insisted on presenting their offerings; either their health, their fortunes, or their integrity. Though numbers incessantly disappeared, the assembly, receiving continual supplies, preserved its grandeur and its brilliancy. At the entrance I observed Vanity, fantastically crowned with flowers and feathers, to whom the fickle deity committed the initiation of her votaries. These having fluttered as gaily as their predecessors, in a few moments vanished, and were succeeded by others. All who rejected the solicitations of Vanity, were compelled to enter by Ridicule, whose shafts were universally dreaded. Even Literature, Science, and Philosophy were obliged to comply. Those only escaped who were concealed beneath the veil of Obscurity. As I gazed on this glittering scene, having declined the invitation of Vanity, Ridicule shot an arrow from her bow, which pierced my heart: I fainted, and in the violence of my agitation awaked.'

To judge from the small type in which they were printed, and the places assigned to them in the columns of Mr. Sylvanus Urban, that practised judge of literary merit attached no great value to the lucubrations of 'The Scribbler,' and they were discontinued after September 1781. The author of the 'Table Talk' states that he was present when Mr. Rogers tore to pieces, and threw into the fire, a manuscript operatic drama, the 'Vintage of Burgundy,' which he had written early in life. 'He told me he offered it to a manager, who said, "I will bring it on the stage if you are determined to have it acted, but it will certainly be damned."' Unless this drama was composed wholly or in part between

1781 and 1786, we must conclude that this interval was employed in preparing for his first public appearance as a poet, which was not unlikely, considering the amount of labour that he was wont to devote to his compositions. The 'Ode to Superstition, with some other Poems,' was published in 1786. It was an eighteen-penny quarto of twenty-six pages, after the fashion of the times, when the eye was relieved by 'rivulets of text running through meadows of margin.' He is reported to have said: 'I wrote it whilst in my teens, and afterwards touched it up. I paid down to the publisher 30*l.* to insure him from being a loser by it. At the end of four years, I found that he had sold about twenty copies. However, I was consoled by reading in a critique on the "Ode" that I was "an able writer," or some such expression.'

Whoever lived much with him will remember that any reference to the 'Ode' was the inevitable prelude to the production of the volume containing the critique, —the 'Monthly Review,' December 1786. It began thus:—'In these pieces we perceive the hand of an able master. The "Ode to Superstition" is written with uncommon boldness of language and strength of diction. The author has collected some of the most striking historical facts, to illustrate the tyranny of the demon he addresses, and has exhibited them with the fire and energy proper to lyric poetry. The following stanzas are particularly excellent.' The reviewer then quotes, without remarking the resemblance, the very stanzas or strophes which are most palpably imitated from Gray's 'Bard.' 'Alexander's Feast' was also copied

in parts, and the result recalls the fable of the ambitious frog, or reminds us of 'all the contortions of the Sibyl without one particle of her inspiration.' Almost the only lines which do not creak, groan, and tremble with the strain, or which bear token of his subsequently matured preference for simple uninverted language, are the following:

'Hark! who mounts the sacred pyre,
Blooming in her bridal vest?
She hurls the torch! she fans the fire!
To die is to be blest.
She clasps her lord to part no more,
And sighing, sinks! but sinks to soar.'

. . . . . .

'Thou spak'st, and lo! a new creation glowed.
Each unhewn mass of living stone
Was clad in horrors, not its own,
And at its base the trembling nations bowed.
Giant Error, darkly grand,
Grasped the globe with iron hand.'

The wonder is, that whilst imitating Gray, Rogers was not irresistibly and exclusively attracted by the 'Elegy.' One would have thought that he, of all others, would have been fascinated by the exquisite finish and sober grace of that inimitable poem. But it was easier to mimic the clamour and clatter of the dithyrambic ode than to catch the pathos and simplicity of the 'Elegy' or the 'Ode to Eton College.'

Mr. Rogers's compositions down to this time, both in verse and prose, leave the impression that he was extremely anxious to write without having anything to write about. He had sharpened and polished his tools, and had acquired no slight dexterity in the use of them,

but materials were altogether wanting. He had laid up no stock of thought, sentiment, or observation worthy of being worked up or moulded into form; and all his attempts to compensate for this deficiency by artificial fire, borrowed movements, and forced enthusiasm, were doomed to failure. He at length hit upon the right vein, and from the moment he discovered that he was destined to excel by grace, elegance, subdued sentiment, and chastened fancy—not by fervid passion, lofty imagination, or deep feeling,—his poetic fortune was made.

During the six years that elapsed before he again ventured into print, he visited Paris and Edinburgh, conversed with many who were acting as well as with some who were writing history, and indefinitely extended his knowledge of books, of external nature, of social systems, and of mankind. The firstfruits were the 'Pleasures of Memory,' published with the name of the author in 1792.

The epoch was fortunately hit upon or judiciously chosen. The old school was wearing out, and the new had not commenced. The poem struck into the happy medium between the precise and conventional style, and the free and natural one. The only competitor, formidable from newly acquired popularity, was Cowper. Crabbe's fame was then limited: Darwin never had much: and Burns, incomparably the greatest poetic genius of his generation (1759–1796), was not appreciated in England in his lifetime, or something better than an exciseman's place would have been bestowed upon him. We are, therefore, not surprised at the immediate success of Rogers's second and better calculated

experiment on the public taste. Yet with undeniable merits of a high order, it had little of the genuine inspiration of original genius. The strongest proof of its deficiency in this respect is that, although it has long taken its place as an English classic, none of its mellifluous verses or polished images are freshly remembered, like 'The coming events cast their shadows before,' of Campbell; or the 'O woman, in our hours of ease,' of Scott; or the 'Oh, ever thus from childhood's hour,' of Moore; or the 'He who hath bent him o'er the dead,' of Byron; or the 'Creature not too bright or good,' of Wordsworth. Any zealous admirer of these writers will be ready at any moment to justify his or her admiration, by quoting passage after passage. Where is the zealous admirer of Rogers's poetry, who feels qualified, without adequate preparation, to recite six consecutive lines from the 'Pleasures of Memory'?

The commencement, and indeed almost everything rural or pastoral in the poem, is too redolent of Goldsmith; and in minute description, Rogers provokes compromising comparisons with Crabbe; but he has never been excelled in the art of blending fancy and feeling with historic incident and philosophical reflection, as in the passage beginning:

> 'So Scotia's Queen, as slowly dawned the day,
> Rose on her couch, and gazed her soul away.
> . . . . . .
> Thus kindred objects kindred thoughts inspire,
> As summer clouds flash forth electric fire.
> And hence this spot gives back the joys of youth,
> Warm as the life, and with the mirror's truth.

Hence homefelt pleasure prompts the Patriot's sigh,
This makes him wish to live and dare to die.
. . . . . .
And hence the charm historic scenes impart;
Hence Tiber awes, and Avon melts the heart;
Aërial forms, in Tempe's classic vale,
Glance through the gloom, and whisper in the gale,
In wild Vaucluse with love and Laura dwell,
And watch and weep in Eloisa's cell.'

Elegance of expression and truth of description cannot be more happily united, than in the lines on the bee:

'Hark! the bee winds her small but mellow horn,
Blithe to salute the sunny smile of morn,
O'er thymy downs she bends her busy course,
And many a stream allures her to its source.
'Tis noon, 'tis night. That eye so finely wrought,
Beyond the search of sense, the soar of thought,
Now vainly asks the scenes she left behind:
Its orb so full, its vision so confined!
Who guides the patient pilgrim to her cell?
Who bids her soul with conscious triumph swell?
With conscious truth, retrace the mazy clue
Of summer scents, that charmed her as she flew?
Hail, Memory, hail! thy universal reign
Guards the least link of Being's glorious chain.'

The fondness for alliteration displayed in this poem attracted the attention of the critics; and Rogers used to say that a proposed emendation in the second of the following lines, which form the commencement of the second part, was the best suggestion he ever received from a reviewer:

'Sweet Memory, wafted by thy gentle gale,
Oft up the tide of Time I turn my sail.'

The critic's suggestion was that, to complete the alliteration, the line should stand thus:

'Oft up the tide of Time I turn my tail.'

The 'Pleasures of Memory' ends thus:

'Hail, Memory, hail! in thy exhaustless mine
From age to age unnumbered treasures shine:
Thought and her shadowy brood thy call obey,
And Place and Time are subject to thy sway;
Thy pleasures most we feel, when most alone,
The only pleasures we can call our own.
Lighter than air, Hope's summer visions die,
If but a fleeting cloud obscure the sky;
If but a beam of sober reason play,
Lo, Fancy's fairy frost-work melts away!
But can the wiles of Art, the grasp of Power,
Snatch the rich relics of a well-spent hour?
These, when the trembling spirit wings her flight,
Pour round her path a stream of living light;
And gild those pure and perfect realms of rest,
Where Virtue triumphs, and her sons are blest.'

These are the lines which Mackintosh, thereby giving the measure of his own poetic feeling, used to say were equal to the closing lines of the 'Dunciad.' This was like saying that Virgil's apostrophe to Marcell us isequal to Homer's Battle of the Gods, the style being essentially distinct; and the real question being, whether any given degree of grace or sentiment can be placed on a level with the corresponding degree of grandeur or sublimity. We are by no means sure that, if it were necessary to challenge a comparison with Pope, we should not rather rely on one of the passages in which Rogers, by dint of finely-shaded language and felicitous illustration, invests the description of a

familiar phenomenon in natural or mental philosophy with the most seductive charms of sensibility and poetry. For example:

'Ah! who can tell the triumphs of the mind,
By truth illumined, and by taste refined?
When age has quenched the eye, and closed the ear,
Still nerved for action in her native sphere,
Oft will she rise—with searching glance pursue
Some long-loved image vanished from her view;
Dart thro' the deep recesses of the past,
O'er dusky forms in chains of slumber cast;
With giant grasp fling back the folds of night,
And snatch the faithless fugitive to light.
So thro' the grove the impatient mother flies,
Each sunless glade, each secret pathway tries;
Till the thin leaves the truant boy disclose,
Long on the wood-moss stretched in sweet repose.

Why verses like these should have failed to lay fast and durable hold on the public mind, is a problem well worthy of critical examination. The most plausible solution is suggested by their want of simplicity and spontaneity. Their linked sweetness is too long and elaborately drawn out; and the very symmetry and artistic finish of a production may militate against its general popularity. When Campbell complained to James Smith of not having been included in the 'Rejected Addresses,' he was politely assured that to parody his poetry was as impossible as to caricature his handsome and regular features. 'I should like to be amongst them for all that,' was his remark; and he was partly right; for what cannot be parodied will not be so often quoted, nor so freshly remembered. In the preface to the annotated edition of the 'Rejected

Addresses,' Rogers and Campbell are placed on the same footing, and their common exclusion is justified on the same complimentary principle. 'The Pleasures of Memory,' however, rendered invaluable service by its purity of language and chasteness of tone, which immediately became the objects of improving imitation and elevating rivalry. To it, also, must be assigned the honour of having suggested 'The Pleasures of Hope;" and more than one of the detached thoughts and images has obtained popularity and circulation in disguise. As Sir Walter Scott had avowedly never seen Melrose by moonlight when he wrote the famous passage beginning:

> 'If thou wouldst view fair Melrose aright,
> Go visit it by the pale moonlight—
> For the gay beams of lightsome day
> Gild but to flout the ruins gray'—

we may fairly suppose that he borrowed a hint from Rogers's:

> 'As the stern grandeur of a Gothic tower,
> Awes us less deeply in its morning hour,
> Than when the shades of Time serenely fall
> On every broken arch and ivied wall'—

lines which suggest the mellowing effect of age as well as that of evening.

Nearly six years were to elapse before Rogers had hived up enough for another publication. His 'Epistle to a Friend, with other Poems,' appeared in 1798. The 'Epistle' is a vehicle for conveying, after the manner of Horace and (in parts) of Pope, the writer's notions of social comfort and happiness, as influenced by dwelling,

furniture, books, pictures, and companions,—subjects on all of which he was admirably qualified to speak. His precepts are delivered in a series of graceful couplets, and enforced by authorities collected in the notes. Of course, he is all for moderation, simplicity, and retirement,—what poet or poetaster is not?—with about the same amount of practical earnestness as Grattan, when he declared he could be content in a small neat house, with cold meat, bread, potatoes, *and plenty of claret*; or as a couple from May Fair, who, when they talk of love in a cottage, are dreaming of a cottage like the dairy-house at Taymouth or Cashiobury. All Rogers wanted, was to be able to enjoy every pleasure or luxury he really cared about; and as he did not care about a numerous establishment or a large house, the model villa to which he invites his friend is of restricted dimensions:

> 'Here no state chambers in long line unfold,
> Bright with broad mirrors, rough with fretted gold:
> Yet modest ornament with use combined,
> Attracts the eye to exercise the mind.'
> *Small change of scene, small space his home requires,*
> *Who leads a life of satisfied desires.*'

This strikes us to be what Partridge would call a *non sequitur*. Like the Presbyterian divine who, after praying that all the lady of the manor's desires might be gratified, judiciously added, 'provided they be virtuous,'—Rogers, after laying down that a life of satisfied desires implied a contracted sphere of action, should have added 'provided they be limited.' The spendthrift who complained there was no living in England

like a gentleman under forty thousand a year, would not have led a life of satisfied desires, with small change of scene or small space to disport in.

Nothing in their way can be better than the fourteen lines in which the poet inculcates the wise doctrine, that engravings and copies from the best pictures and statues are far preferable to mediocre or second-rate originals:

> 'What tho' no marble breathes, no canvas glows,
> From every point a ray of genius flows.
> Be mine to bless the mere mechanic skill
> That stamps, renews, and multiplies at will,
> And cheaply circulates thro' distant climes
> The fairest relics of the purest times.
> Here from the mould to conscious being start
> These finer forms, the miracles of art;
> Here chosen gems, impress on sulphur, shine
> That slept for ages in a second mine;
> And here the faithful graver dares to trace
> A Michael's grandeur and a Raphael's grace!
> Thy gallery, Florence, gilds my humble walls,
> And my low roof the Vatican recalls.'

The ornaments of the bath are also happily touched off:

> 'The shadowy walls record with Attic art,
> The strength and beauty which its waves impart;
> Here Thetis bending with a mother's fears
> Dips her dear boy, whose pride restrains his tears;
> There Venus, rising, shrinks with sweet surprise
> As her fair self reflected seems to rise.'

The 'Description of Winter' is marked by the same delicate fancy which is displayed in the 'Rape of the Lock' on a different class of phenomena:

'When Christmas revels in a world of snow,
And bids her berries blush, her carols flow:
His spangling shower when Frost the wizard flings,
Or, borne in ether blue, on viewless wings,
O'er the white pane his silvery foliage weaves,
And gems with icicles the sheltering eaves,—
Thy muffled friend his nectarine wall pursues'—

There is no disputing the eye for nature which fixed and carried off the image of the silvery foliage woven on the white pane. At one of his Sunday breakfasts, he had quoted with decided commendation Leigh Hunt's couplet on a fountain (in 'Rimini'), selected by Byron as one of the most poetical descriptions of a natural object he was acquainted with:

'Clear and compact, till at its height o'errun,
It shakes its loos'ning silver in the sun.'

'I give my vote,' said one of the guests, 'for

'O'er the white pane his silvery foliage weaves.'

Rogers looked for a moment as if he were about to re-enact Parr's reception of the flattering visitor at Birmingham.

Fourteen years elapsed between the publication of the 'Epistle to a Friend,' and 'Columbus,' which formed part of a new edition of his poems in 1812. It was followed by 'Jacqueline' in 1814. We look upon both these productions as mistakes, especially the first, which is a fragmentary epic, and deals with topics requiring the highest order of imagination to invest them with fitting grandeur and interest. When chasms are left in the narrative, and an author only professes to open

glimpses into the past or the future, he can claim no allowance for Homeric slumbers,—for tameness of diction or extravagance of invention. Each detached scene or picture should be complete in its way, for the very reason that it is detached. Rogers has done little more than versify, with less than his usual attention to metre and rhythm, the well-known events in the lives and adventures of Columbus and his companions, interspersed with imitations of Dante, Virgil, and Euripides. His machinery is an *un*happy medium between Pope's and Milton's; and when he made an American deity, or angel of darkness, hight Merion, rise 'in pomp of plumage,' in the shape of a condor, to descend and 'couch on Roldan's ample breast' in the shape of a vampire, he delivered himself, bound hand and foot, into the hands of the scorner.

We wish we could add that the conception is redeemed by the execution; but the perusal of the poem is rendered positively disagreeable by the breaks and the constant straining after effect. The most successful contrivance is the use made of the trade-winds; the water-spouts of the New World, also, are felicitously introduced:

> 'And see the heavens bow down, the waters rise,
> And, rising, shoot in columns to the skies,
> That stand, and still when they proceed, retire,—
> As in the Desert burned the sacred fire,
> Moving in silent majesty,—till Night
> Descends and shuts the vision from their sight.'

The scorner speedily came forth in the guise of a candid friend. The late Lord Dudley (then Mr. Ward)

reviewed 'Columbus' in the 'Quarterly Review' in a tone of calculated depreciation, made more incisive by the affectation of respect. The poet's feelings may be fancied when he read the polished quiz upon his deities and his condor, and was asked, 'what but extreme haste and carelessness could have occasioned the author of the "Pleasures of Memory" to mistake for verse such a line as—

'There silent sate many an unbidden guest.'

This line will not be found in the later editions, but the two following are in the last:

'And midway on their passage to eternity.' (Canto 1.)
'That world a prison-house, full of sights of woe.' (Canto 12.)

Ward had greatly aggravated his offence by communicating with his intended victim on the subject of the criticism during its composition; and he well merited the characteristic retaliation which it provoked:

'Ward has no heart, they say; but I deny it.
He has a heart, and gets his speeches by it.'

According to the author of the 'Table Talk,' Rogers confessed to have written this epigram, with a little assistance from Richard Sharp. One day, he adds, while Rogers was on bad terms with Ward, Lady Davy said to him, 'Have you seen Ward lately?' '*What* Ward?' 'Why, our Ward, of course.' '*Our* Ward! —you may keep him all to yourself.'

Ward was not a man to be behindhand in this kind of contest; and his adversary's cadaverous complexion

afforded as ample material for jocularity as his own alleged want of heart. Indeed, Jack Bannister maintained that more good things had been said and written on Rogers's face than on that of the greatest beauty. It was Ward who asked him why, now that he could afford it, he did not set up his hearse; and it was the same sympathising companion who, when Rogers repeated the couplet:

> 'The robin, with his furtive glance,
> Comes and looks at me askance,'

struck in with, 'If it had been a carrion crow, he would have looked you full in the face.'

Mackintosh made a gallant effort ('Edinburgh Review,' No. 43) to neutralise the corrosive sublimate of Ward's article; but impartial opinion concurred in the main with the less favourable judgment, and even the Vision (Canto 12), which both agreed in praising, is not free from the prevalent faults of the poem,—obvious effort, abruptness, and obscurity.

Matters were not much improved by the publication, two years later (1814), of 'Jacqueline' in the same volume with 'Lara,' which suggested the notion of an innocent maiden choosing a high-bred rake for her travelling companion. If she preserved her virtue, she was tolerably sure to lose her reputation; and

> 'Pretty Miss Jacqueline,
> With her nose aquiline,'

afforded fine sport to the wits, and to her noble yokefellow among the rest. The 'Corsair' had already got

his Kaled, a lady who did not stand upon trifles and wore small-clothes. How, in a corrupt age, could Jacqueline hope to obtain a preference by dint of the gentle virtues, even though

> 'Her voice, whate'er she said, enchanted:
> Like music, to the heart it went.
> And her dark eyes,—how eloquent!
> Ask what they would, 'twas granted.'

Some years since a story got about touching an application from an American lady of distinction to Lady Palmerston for an invitation for a female friend. The request was politely declined, and the applicant wrote to express her surprise at the slight put upon a young lady 'who, in her own country, was more in the habit of granting favours than of asking them.' 'She must be like my Jacqueline,' said Rogers, when he heard the story; 'for Byron would always have it that the line—

> '"Ask what *they* would, 'twas granted,"

did not necessarily refer to her eyes.'

We had some hopes of Jacqueline, when she left her paternal abode at midnight 'a guilty thing and full of fears,' or she might have made a sensation by getting drowned, like Lord Ullin's daughter, when

> 'One lovely arm was stretched for aid,
> And one was round her lover.'

But when, after so much preliminary weeping and melancholy, it turns out that her departure was *pour le bon motif*, and that D'Arcay's intentions were all along honourable: when she enters safe and sound in person

and reputation, hanging on the arm of a young husband, to ask and obtain an aged father's blessing,—readers, with palates vitiated by more stimulating food, might be excused for exclaiming, like Sheridan when the servant threw down the platewarmer without breaking the plates: 'Why, d—n it, sir, have you made all that noise for nothing?'

Rogers was very angry at the brief notice taken of this poem in Mr. George Ellis's review of the 'Corsair' and 'Lara' in the 'Quarterly Review,' as 'the highly refined, but somewhat insipid, pastoral tale of "Jacqueline."' Lady Byron is reported to have told Rogers in 1851, at Brighton, that her liege lord, on reading Ellis's article, had said; 'The man's a fool. "Jacqueline" is as superior to "Lara," as Rogers is to me.' We might suspect a double meaning in these words, as in Porson's remark that '"Madoc" will be read when Homer and Virgil are forgotten.' But Lord Byron had said nearly the same thing in the preface to the joint publication; and in his Diary of November 23, 1813 (published by Moore), after saying that 'Scott is undoubtedly the monarch of Parnassus, and the most English of bards,' he continues: 'I should place Rogers next in the living list. I value him more, as the last of the *best* school; Moore and Campbell both third.' At the same time he could hardly help seeing that 'Jacqueline' did not belong to the best school (Pope's); and that to couple this poem with 'Lara' was as suicidal and self-sacrificing an act in Rogers, as Byron would have committed, had he consented to print his 'Hints from Horace' (which he himself originally pre-

ferred to 'Childe Harold') in the same volume with 'Human Life.'

In 'Human Life,' published in 1819, Rogers was himself again. In it and by it, in our opinion, his genius, if not his fame, reached the culminating point. The subject, or rather range of subjects, exactly suited him; and in this, the masterpiece of his matured powers, he occasionally combines the worldly wisdom of Horace and the glancing philosophy of Pope, with the tender melancholy of Goldsmith and Cowper's mastery over domestic scenes and affections. The similarity in parts to Schiller's 'Song of the Bell' is certainly striking; but the common character of the subject, and the widely different style of versification, repel all suspicion of plagiarism.

Nothing can be happier than the rapid introductory sketch of the four epochs—the birth, the coming of age, the marriage, and the death of the proprietor of the old manor-house; for example:—

> 'And soon again shall music swell the breeze;
> Soon, issuing forth, shall glitter through the trees,
> Vestures of nuptial white; and hymns be sung,
> And violets scattered round; and old and young,
> In every cottage porch with garlands green,
> Stand still to gaze, and, gazing, bless the scene.
> While, her dark eyes declining, by his side,
> Moves in her virgin veil, the gentle bride.'

Spenser himself never painted with words more distinctly; though when the 'Faery Queen' was read aloud to an old lady deprived of sight, she remarked that it was as if a succession of pictures had been held up before her. Admirably, again, is indicated that

instinctive sense of immortality, that vague longing for something better than the evanescent realities of life, by which the noblest minds are stimulated and disturbed unceasingly. We refer to the passage beginning—

> 'Do what he will he cannot realise
> Half he conceives, the glorious vision flies.
> Go where he may, he cannot hope to find
> The truth, the beauty, pictured in his mind.'

The expansion and effusion of heart, with the delicious interchange of thought and feeling, which follow the acceptance of the lover by his future wife, are thus described:

> 'Then come those full confidings of the past;
> All sunshine now, where all was overcast.
> Then do they wander till the day is gone,
> Lost in each other; and when night steals on,
> Covering them round, how sweet her accents are!
> Oh, when she turns and speaks, her voice is far,
> Far above singing! but soon nothing stirs
> To break the silence; joy like his, like hers,
> Deals not in words. And now the shadows close,
> Now in the glimmering, dying light she grows
> Less and less earthly! As departs the day,
> All that was mortal seems to melt away,
> Till, like a gift resumed as soon as given,
> She fades at last into a spirit from heaven.'

Schiller takes the comparatively prosaic view of marriage, as the death of sentiment, and the grave of romance.[1] Rogers strikes into a more original and (all

[1] 'Mit dem Gürtel, mit dem Schleier,
Reisst der schöne Wahn entzwei.'
(*Das Lied von der Glocke.*)

things considered) perhaps truer vein. At least, for the credit of poor human nature, we will hope so. He bids the young bridegroom to regard his bride as 'a guardian angel o'er his life presiding;' and warns both of them, in lines that deserve to be written in gold over every hearth, that—

> 'The soul of music slumbers in the shell,
> Till waked and kindled by the master's spell;
> And feeling hearts, touch them but rightly, pour
> A thousand melodies, unheard before.'

As we proceed from love and marriage to the closing scene, the death-bed, our admiration is still, with few pauses or interruptions, on the ascending scale:

> 'When on his couch he sinks at last to rest,
> Those by his counsel saved, his power redress'd,
> . . . . . .
> Come and stand round—the widow and her child,
> As when she first forgot her tears and smiled.
> They who watch by him see not, but he sees,
> Sees and exults—Were ever dreams like these?
> Those who watch by him, hear not; but he hears,
> And Earth recedes, and Heaven itself appears!'

This is genuine poetry. It will bear any test or criterion, and will fare best by being tried by Wordsworth's,—the extent to which the imagination blends itself with the scene supposed to be passing, and realises it to the mind's eye. But there is one material drawback. The last line is obviously (if unconsciously) borrowed from 'The Dying Christian to his Soul' of Pope:

> 'The world recedes: it disappears!
> Heaven opens on my eyes! my ears
> With sounds seraphic ring.'

The first part of 'Italy' was published anonymously in 1822; and the secret must have been tolerably well kept for a period, since the 'Literary Gazette' confidently attributed the authorship to Southey. The poem was subsequently completed at intervals; and in its finished state (1834), offers a rich treat to the scholar, the virtuoso, and the lettered traveller. No one would have exclaimed more enthusiastically, or with less call for factitious warmth, than Rogers: 'Far from me, and my friends, be such frigid philosophy as may conduct us indifferent and unmoved over any ground which has been dignified by wisdom, bravery, or virtue;' and, go where he would, his memory was stored with every description of image or incident that could evoke or harmonise with the genius of the place.

There is a great deal more to see and feel in Italy than objects or impressions which the classic student can alone, or best, appreciate. She has been three times the mistress of the world,—by Arms, by Art, by Faith; and her mediæval annals teem with the genuine romance of history. Venice, Padua, Ferrara, Bologna, Florence, Rome, Naples,—each of these names opens a separate treasure-house of associations; and to enjoy and fully profit by his tour, the traveller should have read Guicciardini, Giannone, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Vasari, besides Pliny, Horace, and Virgil: besides having a trained eye for the masterpieces of painting, sculpture, and architecture. Rogers started with reading and taste enough for an accomplished traveller, and perhaps more than enough for the poet

who was to celebrate what he saw. His mind was obviously overlaid by his acquired knowledge: his invention was stifled by his memory: when he wished to record an impression, he involuntarily reverted to what an admired author had said on the same subject; and we strongly suspect that what really charms so many cultivated readers of this poem, is that they frequently find their favourite passages reproduced with a certain air of novelty. Thus the fine passage beginning

'O Italy, how beautiful thou art!'

recalls Filicaja's famous sonnet; and

'The very dust we tread, stirs as with life,'

comes too near

'Pause! for thy tread is on a nation's dust.'

His reflections on entering Rome are tame for poetry, and will not bear a comparison with Alison's (in the 'Essay on Taste') although these are conveyed in the humbler vehicle of prose. Rogers is more at home in the Campagna of Rome, at Venice, on approaching Genoa from the sea, or on the Alps, in ascending and descending which he is inspired with what strike us as the finest and truest of his descriptive passages.

'Italy' was the last of his formal and deliberate appeals to the public; but down to his ninetieth year he occasionally wrote verses, and whilst his mental powers lasted, he was unceasingly occupied in polishing his couplets and correcting or enriching his notes. A bear keeping itself alive by sucking its

paws, was suggested as a parallel case, and was repeated to him. The real culprit, on being charged with the simile, coolly assigned it to Luttrell, who laughingly consented to accept it 'with its responsibilities:' and it is by no means a bad illustration of the manner in which Rogers coddled and dandled his literary productions and reputation to the last.

Amongst the records of Sydney Smith's conversation is an entry which evidently refers to Rogers:

'"How is ——?" "He is not very well." "Why, what is the matter?" "Oh, don't you know he has produced a couplet? When our friend is delivered of a couplet, with infinite pain and labour, he takes to his bed, has straw laid down, the knocker tied up, expects his friends to call and make enquiries, and the answer at the door invariably is, Mr. —— and his little couplet are as well as can be expected." When he produces an Alexandrine, he keeps his bed a day longer.'

He has left in the shape of notes, or episodical narratives (like Montorio, and the Bag of Gold, in 'Italy'), the choicest collection of anecdotes and quotations, and some of the most exquisite pieces of prose composition in the language. Where do we find more happily expressed than in the introductory paragraphs of 'Marco Griffoni,' a train of reflection which recent events have forced upon mankind all the world over?

'War is a game at which all are sure to lose, sooner or later, play they how they will; yet every nation has delighted in war, and none more in their day than the little republic

of Genoa, whose galleys, while she had any, were always burning and sinking those of the Pisans, the Venetians, the Greeks, or the Turks: Christian and infidel alike to her.

'But experience, when dearly bought, is seldom thrown away altogether. A moment of sober reflection came at last: and after a victory the most splendid and ruinous of any in her annals, she resolved from that day and for ever to live at peace with all mankind: having in her long career acquired nothing but glory, and a tax on every article of life.'

Mackintosh used to cite the short essay on 'National Prejudices' in 'Italy,' as perfect both in thought and style.

One of Rogers's peculiar fancies was that even the best writers might be improved by condensation; and it was vain to warn him that to strip Jeremy Taylor or Burke of what he called redundancies overlaying the sense, was like stripping a tree of its blossoms and foliage, with the view of bringing out the massive roundness of the trunk. 'There,' he exclaimed one evening, after displaying one of Burke's noblest effusions (in which every word has its appointed task) reduced to less than one half of its original dimensions,—'there, concentrated as it now is, it would blow up a cathedral.' 'Not,' he added after a short pause, 'that Burke would like it to be used for such a purpose.' In a note to the last canto of 'Columbus,' may be seen a specimen of this system of condensation; the famous passage in which the Angel addresses Lord Bathurst being reduced to little more than a *caput mortuum*. It was a constant source of triumph to him that he had told within the compass

of a moderate paragraph, an anecdote to which Wordsworth devotes twenty-three lines of verse, and Lord Houghton twenty-eight. It stands thus in Rogers's prose version:—

'You admire that picture, said an old Dominican to me at Padua, as I stood contemplating a Last Supper in the refectory of his convent, the figures as large as the life. I have sat at my meals before it for seven and forty years, and such are the changes that have taken place among us—so many have come and gone in the time—that, when I look upon the company there—upon those who are sitting at that table, silent as they are—I am sometimes inclined to think that we, and not they, are the shadows.' (*Italy*, p. 312.)

There was one consequence of having printed his best anecdotes to which he submitted reluctantly. He was loth to surrender the privilege of relating them; and he was comically perplexed between the pleasure of having told what was accepted as new by the company, and disappointment at finding that his cherished notes had been forgotten or never read at all. 'You don't seem to know where that comes from,' became at last his frequent reproach to a friend (the writer), who knew all his notes by heart, yet listened to them with an air of interest. 'I will show you whether I do or not,' was the rejoinder; and during their two or three next meetings, he invariably gave the reference to each story as it was told. Rogers could not bear this, and a compromise was effected; he agreeing to give credit for the knowledge which had only been suppressed from courtesy.

A portion of the 'parting word' which he addressed

to the readers of 'Italy,' will form an apt introduction to our remarks on those features of his character and elements of his reputation which must be learnt and studied apart from his writings:

> 'Nature denied him much,
> But gave him at his birth what most he values;
> A passionate love for music, sculpture, painting,
> For poetry, the language of the gods,
> For all things here, or grand or beautiful,
> A setting sun, a lake among the mountains,
> The light of an ingenuous countenance,
> And what transcends them all, a noble action.
> Nature denied him much, but gave him more;
> And ever, ever grateful should he be,
> Though from his cheek, ere yet the down was there,
> Health fled; for in his heaviest hours would come
> Gleams such as come not now; nor failed he then
> (Then and through life his happiest privilege)
> Full oft to wander where the Muses haunt,
> Smit with the love of song.'

Nature did not give him a passionate love for anything, animate or inanimate:

> 'Not his the wealth to some large natures lent,
> Divinely lavish, even when misspent;
> That liberal sunshine of exuberant soul,
> Thought, sense, affection, warming up the whole.'

What she gave him—and a rich endowment it is—was an exquisite sensibility to excellence, or (what is nearly the same thing) the power of deriving gratification from the most refined objects of human enjoyment: and he devoted his long life to the cultivation of this faculty till it reached the highest degree of perfection to which taste, without enthusiasm and cul-

tivated with an Epicurean aim, can be deemed capable of attaining.

So striking a confirmation of our own theory of his character has just reached us from an accomplished friend,[1] who knew and loved him, that we are tempted to quote part of it:—'I believe no man ever was so much attended to and thought of, who had so slender a fortune and such calm abilities. His God was Harmony; and over his life Harmony presided sitting on a lukewarm cloud. He was *not* the poet, sage, and philosopher people expect to find he was; but a man in whom the tastes (rare fact) preponderated over the passions, who defrayed the expenses of his tastes as other men make outlay for the gratification of their passions. He did nothing rash. I am sure Rogers as a baby never fell down unless he was pushed; but walked from chair to chair in the drawing-room, steadily and quietly, till he reached the place where the sunbeam fell on the carpet. He must always have preferred a lullaby to the merriest game of romps; and, if he could have spoken, would have begged his long clothes might be made of fine mull muslin instead of cambric or jacquenot; the first fabric being of incomparable softness, and the two latter capable of that which he loathed, starch.'

Everything around and about him spoke the same language and told the same story. The voluminous catalogue of his accumulations has been recently perused by thousands; and his treasures have been laid bare for weeks to the inspection of connoisseurs under

[1] Mrs. Norton, afterwards Lady Stirling Maxwell.

every disadvantage of confusion; yet (making due allowance for things which, if they ever belonged to him, had been flung aside into drawers or cupboards) the universal impression has been astonishment at the judgment, knowledge, forbearance, and eye for beauty throughout the whole range of art, displayed by the collector. It was said of a celebrated lawyer, that he had no rubbish in his head; it might have been said of Rogers (judging only from what met the eye) that he had no rubbish in his house. Varied as were his stores, they were not heaped one upon another or thrown into incongruous groups: his pictures, statues, bronzes, vases, medals, curious books, and precious manuscripts, simply supplied the place of the ordinary ornamental furniture of a gentleman's house; and there was nothing beyond their intrinsic excellence to remind the visitor that almost every object his eye fell upon was a priceless gem, a coveted rarity, or an acknowledged masterpiece. In this respect, as in many others, the superiority of the tenant of 22 St. James's Place to the fastidious lord of Strawberry Hill, shone conspicuous.

It should also be remembered that Rogers was at no time overburdened with wealth; and that, sixty years since, the patronage of art and literature was confined to the most opulent of our nobles and landed gentry; who devoted their thousands per annum to furnishing a gallery, with the same indiscriminating prodigality with which their less polished compeers proceeded to form a racing stud. There were no *nouveaux riches* to bid for Wilsons or Gainsboroughs, as they now bid for the

productions, as fast as they can be finished, of Landseer, Eastlake, Leslie, Millais, Mulready, Hart, Roberts, Stanfield, or Maclise; nor, under any circumstances, would it be easy to over-estimate the beneficial influence of a judge and occasional purchaser, like Mr. Rogers, mingling familiarly with artists, distinguishing genuine originality from its plausible counterfeit, encouraging the first faint struggles of modest merit, and controlling the extravagance into which genius is too often hurried by its characteristic rashness or self-confidence. Although his limited house-room and fortune commonly restricted his personal acquisitions to objects of known value, he had an almost unerring eye for coming success and celebrity. 'I envy and admire your courage in buying Turners,' was his remark to Mr. Munro of Novar, when that gentleman, in well-founded reliance on his own taste and knowledge, ventured to anticipate the verdict of posterity and Mr. Ruskin.

Amongst his 'fragments of beauty,' were some female hands and feet in marble, carefully preserved under glass cases, which it was treason to remove. One evening after dinner, when the male guests rejoined the ladies in the drawing-room, a beauty in the full flush of rank and fashion,[1] whose lightest caprice was law, called to him to come and look at her feet, and he was not a little amused to find that she had disposed a pair of his marble models under her drapery so as to make them occupy the place of her own feet; and (barring nudity

[1] The Queen of Beauty, Lady Seymour, now Duchess of Somerset.

and immobility) they might have realised the tempting vision of Suckling:

> 'Her feet beneath her petticoat,
> Like little mice stole in and out,
> As if they feared the light.'

The illustrated edition of 'Italy' was, we believe, the first instance in which (since Boydell's time) first-class artists were engaged without regard to expense for such a purpose. It was speedily followed by a corresponding edition of the 'Poems;' and every succeeding reprint of Rogers's works has been enriched by engravings or vignettes from drawings or designs by the first of modern English painters, including Edwin Landseer, Eastlake, Turner, Stothard, and Calcott. Many of them are quite perfect in their way; and the author superintended them with the same care with which he polished his own verses. The two first illustrated editions of 'Italy' and the 'Poems' cost him about 15,000*l.*, and there was a period when the speculation threatened to be a losing one. Turner was to have received 50*l.* a piece for his drawings, but on its being represented to him that Rogers had miscalculated the probable returns, the artist immediately offered to take them back; and it was eventually arranged that he should do so, receiving 5*l.* a piece for the use of them.

Rogers's musical taste was a natural gift, the result of organisation, and partook very slightly of the acquired or conventional quality. He delighted in sweet sounds, in soft flowing airs, in tunes linked with pleasing associations, and in simple melodies, rather than in

complicated harmonies. He would have agreed with the critic, who on being informed that a brilliant performance just concluded was extremely difficult, ejaculated, 'I wish it had been impossible.' Amongst Italian composers, Bellini was his favourite. When he dined at home and alone, it was his custom to have an Italian organ-grinder playing in the hall, the organ being set to the Sicilian Mariners' air and other popular tunes of the South. He kept nightingales in cages on his staircase and in his bedroom, closely covered up from the light, to sing to him. The morning was the time when he enjoyed music most: he would then listen for hours to female voices, and we need hardly add that he especially delighted in what may be called rather the musical recitation than the singing of Moore. Nothing annoyed him more than to hear the songs he loved profaned by inferior execution. 'Can *you* stay and bear it?' was his muttered remonstrance to a friend (the writer) whom he fairly dragged out of the room when an accomplished amateur was throwing as much soul as he could muster into—

> 'Give smiles to those who love you less,
> But keep your tears for me.'

This friend had recently spent an evening at Sloperton Cottage, during which Moore sang readily every song that was suggested to him, having first announced that he would only attempt those of the more gay and inspiriting kind; his nervous system having been a good deal shaken by a domestic affliction (the death of his daughter). Mrs. Moore, who watched with considerate affection to see that he did not unconsciously transgress

this rule, left the room; and he began 'When midst the fair I meet,'—but on coming to the lines just mentioned his voice faltered, his hands fell motionless on the piano, and he burst into tears. It was to this incident, which had been related to Rogers, that he referred in his vehement remonstrance.

On another occasion, a breakfast party, one of the guests sang one of Moore's songs in Moore's presence, to the evident discomposure of the poet. 'Well,' said Rogers, 'I have seen the bravest men of my time: I have seen Nelson, Wellington, and Ney, but our friend is the bravest of them all.'

One of the few passages of Shakspeare which he heard or repeated with complacency was:

'Her voice was ever soft,
Gentle, and low; an excellent thing in woman.'

Natural sweetness of tone did not satisfy him either in reading or singing. One of his female acquaintance, whose voice is singularly rich and musical, relates that he once asked her to read out some MS. verses of Moore's or Byron's which were pasted on the flyleaf of one of his books. What he called her singing mode of reading so irritated him, that he snatched the paper out of her hands and (to use her own words) read it aloud himself most touchingly and musically.

Rogers was hardly cold in his grave, when the book named at the head of this article appeared under the auspices of his confidential publisher, Mr. Moxon. On its announcement our hopes rose high. If we despaired of another Boswell, we anticipated something not inferior to Hazlitt's 'Conversations with Northcote;' and

ample materials might have been accumulated by a judicious note-taker for an entertaining and instructive volume, which would have done justice to the 'Talk' it aspired to record. We regret to be obliged to say that this book has grievously disappointed us.

In the first place, we doubt the propriety of printing as the 'Table Talk of Samuel Rogers' the half-remembered and garbled contents of sundry well-known copy-books, in which his recollections were set down in his own condensed and felicitous language. We allude particularly to his notes of conversations with Horner, Tooke, Grattan, Fox, Erskine, Scott, the Duke of Wellington, &c., which, we presume, are now in the possession of his executors, and some time or other will be accurately given to the world.[1] As well might a note-keeping friend carry off an imperfect recollection of an original work that had been read to him in manuscript, and publish an abstract of it for profit.

In the second place, we impugn the qualifications of the compiler for his self-imposed task; for he has repeatedly made Rogers use the very phraseology he notoriously disliked, and fall into errors of which he would have been ashamed.[2]

Indications, also, are not wanting that the compiler was not on such intimate terms with Rogers as he would fain lead the public to believe. Thus:—

'At one time, when I gave a dinner, I used to have

[1] Published the year following by Messrs. Longmans, under the title of *Recollections. By Samuel Rogers.* With a brief Notice by the editor, a nephew and co-executor, Mr. William Sharpe.

[2] Numerous instances were given in this essay as it originally appeared.

candles placed all round the dining-room, and *high up*, in order to show off the pictures. I asked Smith how he liked this plan. "Not at all," he replied; "above there is a blaze of light, and below, nothing but darkness and gnashing of teeth."'

Anyone who ever dined at Rogers's must surely have remembered that the room was lighted by sconces fixed in the wall, and that the light, which was not 'high up,' was reflected from the pictures.

Almost the sole merit or utility of this book consists in the aid or stimulant it may supply to the recollections of others, and in its conveying some notion of the kind of conversation in which Rogers delighted. His choice of topics, not his mode of treating them, may be collected from it. These were books, pictures, morals, manners, literary history, the drama, men and women of genius,—anything or everything but the idle gossip, the unidea'd chatter, half made up of proper names, in which the idle population of London contrive to occupy their time. A morning spent at his breakfast-table was almost invariably well spent. Vacant-minded and uncongenial was the man or woman who did not come away wiser or better.

Most days when the party was small and disposed to linger, he would send for his favourite authors, and read aloud the passages he had marked, pausing at times to note the changes in his own or the popular appreciation. If a fine passage was alluded to by others, 'Find it for me,' was the word; and 'Edmund,' the most intelligent of improvised librarians, was despatched for the volume. 'That lad,' remarked Rogers,

'would find not only any book *in* the house, but I begin to think, any book *out* of the house.'

Without going so far as Byron, who one day said to Moore, 'Well, after all, Tom, don't you think Shakspeare was something of a humbug?'—Rogers had little real admiration for the greatest of poets: and he frequently read aloud from Ben Jonson's 'Discoveries:'—'I remember the players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakspeare, that in his writings, whatsoever he penned, he never blotted out a line. My answer hath been, "Would he had blotted out a thousand!"' Rogers always laid a strong emphasis on the concluding sentence. He one morning challenged the company to produce a passage from Shakspeare which would not have been improved by blotting; and after picking many beautiful specimens to pieces, he was with difficulty silenced by the one beginning—

'How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank.'

A single inharmonious or superfluous word, like the crumpled rose-leaf on the couch, made him restless and captious, and his canons of criticism were fatal to most first-class poetry. He was constantly holding up to censure the remark of a brilliant and popular writer (Macaulay), that there is always something shadowy and vague in the very highest productions of the imagination; yet surely the very essence of sublimity is to be undefined and limitless:

'What *seemed* its head,
The likeness of a kingly crown had on.'

He is reported, we believe correctly, as saying,—

'When I was travelling in Italy, I made two authors my constant study for versification,—Milton and Crowe.' Yet Crowe's versification is commonly inharmonious, his descriptions are laboured, and his thoughts forced. The truth is, Rogers had little or none of the analytical or self-examining faculty, so indispensable in criticising either books or men. He bestowed praise or censure as he was pleased or displeased, without reflecting that when an impression is what the Germans call 'subjective,' it is a most deceptive test of merit or demerit in the object. Thus he once challenged his guests to produce a better verse than—

'Those who came to scoff, remained to pray;'

which has no one distinctive quality of poetry; and he could hardly be brought to admit the poetic superiority of another line in the same passage:

'As some tall cliff that lifts its awful form,
Swells from the vale and midway leaves the storm.'

In reading, he followed Bacon's maxim: to read much, not many things—*multum legere, non multa.* He used to say, 'When a new book comes out, I read an old one.' He often invited popular authors to his house, and spoke to them of their writings, without having read a page of them. His first acquaintance with the many admirable creations of Mr. Dickens's genius was 'Little Nelly.' One of the last compositions which he read slowly and carefully, and praised emphatically, was the Duke of Newcastle's dispatch to Lord Raglan on the Battle of the Alma.

'Be it mine,' writes Gray, 'to lie all day long on a

sofa and read eternal new novels of Marivaux and Crebillon.' This having been quoted at one of Rogers's breakfasts, at which three persons were present besides himself, he asked all in succession whether they had read 'Marianne.' They all replied in the negative. 'Then I will lend you each a copy,' and three copies were immediately produced. He strongly denounced modern French novels. At a breakfast party, consisting of two gentlemen and two young ladies of sixteen and seventeen with their governess, he produced Scribe's 'Tonadillas;' and after expatiating on the moral tendency of the first story, gave the two volumes to the young ladies to take home with them. As soon as they were gone, one of the male guests informed him of the true character of the book, all except the first story being in the most corrupting style of a corrupt school. He started off to redeem his error, but his fair friends had gone into the country and judiciously carried 'Tonadillas' along with them. 'You will never,' he vowed, 'see a modern French novel in my house again.'

He often read from his Notes Rousseau's profession of 'un goût vif pour les déjeûners. C'est le tems de la journée où nous sommes le plus tranquilles, où nous causons le plus à notre aise.' It was a current joke that he asked people to breakfast by way of probation for dinner; but his breakfast parties (till the unwillingness to be alone made him less discriminating) were made for those with whom he wished to live socially, and his dinners, comparatively speaking, were affairs of necessity or form. Even in his happiest moods, he was

not convivial; his spirits never rose above temperate: he disliked loud talking or laughing; and unless some distinguished personage, or privileged wit, was there to break the ice and keep up the ball, the conversation at his dinners not unfrequently flagged. It seemed to be, and perhaps was, toned down by the subdued light, which left half the room in shadow, and speedily awoke the fairer portion of the company to the disagreeable consciousness that their complexions were looking muddy and their toilettes the opposite of fresh. After making every allowance for this drawback, however, his dinners were justly reckoned amongst the pleasantest in Town; and all the diaries of (or relating to) the celebrated characters that have figured on the stage of London life during the last fifty years, bear ample testimony to the fact. Moore's and Byron's alone commemorate remarkable parties enough to give their host immortality as an Amphitryon, and they show, moreover, that he never fell into the weakness of which he is made ('Table Talk,' p. 175) to accuse Bishop Marlay, that of 'giving great dinners chiefly to people of rank and fashion, foolish men and foolish women.' Here are two extracts from Byron's Diary for 1814:—

'Sunday, March 6. On Tuesday last dined with Rogers: Madame de Staël, Mackintosh, Sheridan, Erskine, and Payne Knight, Lady Donegall and Miss R. there. Sheridan told a very good story of himself and Madame de Recamier's handkerchief. Erskine a few good stories of himself only.

'March 10th. Thor's day. On Tuesday dined with Rogers: Mackintosh, Sheridan, Sharpe. Much talk and good, all except my own little prattlement. Set down

Sheridan at Brookes's, where, by the bye, he could not well set down himself, as he and I were the only drinkers.'

Rogers used to relate that, when Madame de Staël first arrived in England in the fulness of her fame, she was invited to one of the large evening parties at Lansdowne House; and after deliberating on the best mode of making her *début*, she requested him to stand with her in a conspicuous portion of the chief saloon, so that she might be first seen by the London world of fashion and politics in close communion with literature.

During the last half of his life, most foreigners of distinction, with many who had no claim on his notice beyond avowed admiration or curiosity, made a point of getting introduced to him, and an introduction almost always implied an invitation to breakfast. He was partial to Americans, both out of gratitude for his popularity in the United States, and because they did not compel him to speak French, in which he never conversed fluently or at his ease. The author of the 'Table Talk' has transferred to Talleyrand's dinner-table a brief colloquy with Lamartine, which Rogers always used to mention as having occurred at one of his own breakfasts.

'Lamartine is a man of genius, but very affected. Talleyrand, when in London, invited me to meet him, and placed me beside him at dinner. I asked him, "Are you acquainted with Beranger?" "No: he wished to be introduced to me, but I declined it." "I would go," said I, "a league to see him." This was nearly all our conversation: he did not choose to talk. In short, he was so disagreeable that, some days after, both Talleyrand and the Duchess di Dino apologised to me for his ill-breeding' (p. 253).

The more authentic version is that Rogers, not allowing for the literary and political feuds of Paris (although he had lived in times when a Tory poet would not willingly have remained in the same room with a Radical), eagerly inquired of Lamartine, who doubtless thought himself a more legitimate subject of interest, what sort of a man Beranger was, and what he was about. '*Je ne le connais pas*,' said Lamartine. '*Je vous plains*,' rejoined Rogers.

He was still more unlucky with August von Schlegel, whom he asked if, since Goethe's death, there had been any poets in Germany. 'I am a poet,' was the indignant response.

The Count and Countess de Montalembert were at one of his breakfasts in 1839. When they had left the room, he remarked to the remaining guests: 'I envy that young man, not for his youth, nor for his name, nor even for his handsome wife, but for his faith. He seems to believe in something, and that makes a man really happy.'

Most appropriately might Rogers have exclaimed with Horace:

> 'Quicquid sum ego, quamvis
> Infra Lucili censum ingeniumque, tamen me
> Cum magnis vixisse invita fatebitur usque
> Invidia.'—

Or still more appropriately with Pope in the 'Imitation':

> 'Envy must own I live among the great
> No pimp of pleasure, and no spy of State:
> With eyes that pry not, tongue that ne'er repeats,
> Fond to spread friendships, but to cover heats;
> To help who want, to forward who excel,
> This all who know me, know; who love me, tell.'

The solid advantages of such a position are undeniable. The privilege of mingling in daily and familiar intercourse with the most eminent men and women of the age, and of going at once to the fountain-head for every description of knowledge, is a proud and enviable one; and in labouring hard for it, Rogers is not to be confounded with the mere lover of titles and fine company for their own sake. A cursory reference to the obstacles he had to surmount at starting, will serve the double purpose of illustrating his character, and of claiming for him the credit which is his due for his subsequent exertions to level or lower the artificial barriers between the aristocracy of birth and rank and that of genius and intellect.

We learn from Moore that, when Sheridan came to Town with his first wife, it was a subject of anxious debate whether the son of a player could be received at Devonshire House, although that player was by birth and education a gentleman. An excuse is suggested by Miss Berry when, referring to the society which she had seen as a girl, she says:—'Authors, actors, composers, singers, musicians, were all equally considered as profligate vagrants. Those whose good taste, or whose greater knowledge of the world, led them to make some exceptions, were implicated in the same moral category.'[1] She adds in the next page:—'It was not till late in the reign of George III. that sculptors,

[1] *England and France: a Comparative View of the Social Condition of both Countries.* By the Editor of *Madame du Deffand's Letters*, vol. ii. p. 42. Allowances must be made for this lady's intimacy with Horace Walpole, who affected a contempt for professional authorship.

architects, and painters (with the single exception of Sir J. Reynolds) were received and formed a chosen part of the best and most chosen society in London.'

This statement is somewhat over-coloured, particularly so far as authors are concerned; although the lives led by some of the most eminent (Fielding, for example), and the early struggles of others (as depicted in Johnson's life of Savage), gave plausibility to the charge of profligacy and vagrancy. But it is an undoubted fact that successful authorship did not of itself constitute a recommendation to the best society till long after Rogers had aspired to become a leading member of it; and his first cautious advances were made rather in the character of a liberal host than of a popular poet.[1] The completion of his house in St. James's Place (about 1802), in which he sought, not unsuccessfully, to carry out the views developed in his 'Epistle to a Friend,' was probably the commencement of his career as a Mæcenas, a diner-out and a dinner-giver of the first water. Yet some of the most distinguished of his connexions were formed at an antecedent period; and one of his best stories was of a dinner given by him, when he occupied chambers in the Temple,[2] to Fox, Sheridan, Erskine, Perry (of the 'Morning Chronicle'), and other Whig notables.

[1] See for example in Moore's *Life of Byron*, or *Memoirs of Moore*, vol. viii. pp. 97, 98, the manner in which the reconciliation dinner for Moore and Byron was made up, Rogers not being then acquainted with the noble poet.

[2] His chambers were in Paper Buildings, and had been occupied by Lord Ellenborough. A new range has since been erected on the site.

The dinner had been ordered from the Mitre Tavern, and was to arrive by instalments. The appointed hour was past, yet not a dish had made its appearance. 'I quietly stole out,' continued Rogers, 'and hurried to the Mitre. "What has become of my dinner?" I asked. "Your dinner, sir,—your dinner is for to-morrow." I stood aghast, and for a moment plans of suicidal desperation crossed my brain: when the tavern-keeper relieved me from my perplexity, by saying that he had so many dinners on hand, that mine, if ever ordered, had escaped his recollection altogether. "Many dinners on hand have you? then if you will send me the best dish from each of them, I will pay you double; and if you won't, you shall never see my face again." As I was a good customer, he chose the more prudent and profitable alternative; and after an hour's waiting my guests were seated and served. "And how did the dinner go off?" "Oh, very well: they got a bad dinner, *but they got a good story to tell against me.*"' The conclusion was characteristic; for he himself would at any time have been consoled for a bad dinner by a good story against the host or the company.

There is another remarkable entry in Byron's Diary for Nov. 22, 1813:—

'Rogers is silent,—and, it is said, severe. When he does talk, he talks well; and, on all subjects of taste, his delicacy of expression is pure as his poetry. If you enter his house—his drawing-room—his library—you of yourself say, this is not the dwelling of a common mind. There is not a gem, a coin, a book thrown aside on his chimney-piece, his sofa, his table, that does not bespeak an almost fastidious elegance in

the possessor. *But this very delicacy must be the misery of his existence. Oh, the jarrings his disposition must have encountered through life!'*

This leads us to the consideration of a well-known peculiarity in his mental construction, or acquired habits, which, strange to say, no one would so much as guess from the 'Table Talk,'—namely, his mode of looking at, or placing, everything and everybody in the most disadvantageous point of view. Franklin, in his autobiography, mentions a gentleman who, having one handsome and one shrivelled leg, was wont to test the disposition of a new acquaintance by observing whether he or she looked first or most at the best or worst leg. Rogers would have forfeited all chance of this gentleman's esteem at starting. Yet there was something irresistibly comic, rather than annoying or repulsive, in the pertinacity and ingenuity with which he indulged his caustic humour. We will give a few instances; but the look, the manner, the tone of voice, and the precise emphasis laid on particular words, cannot be transferred to paper. So uncertain is testimony, and so frail is memory, that even the accuracy of the expressions can rarely be guaranteed.

'Is that the contents you are looking at?' inquired an anxious author, who saw Rogers's eye fixed on a table or list at the commencement of a presentation copy of a new work. 'No,' said Rogers, pointing to the list of subscribers, 'the *dis*contents.'

Rogers, as may be believed, was one of the earliest of Landseer's innumerable admirers. He was known

to have spoken highly of the picture of a Newfoundland dog, entitled 'Portrait of a Distinguished Member of the Royal Humane Society.' On Landseer expressing his gratification, Rogers said: 'Yes, I thought the ring of the dog's collar well painted.'

He was returning from a dinner at Lansdowne House with a friend, who began expatiating on the perfection of the hospitality which they had just enjoyed. 'Did you observe how he helped the fish?' said Rogers.

He had lent 800*l.* to Moore, and as the fact was gratefully bruited about at the time, and is duly recorded in the published Diary, there was and is no harm in Rogers's or our allusion to it. 'When he repaid me the money,' said Rogers, he exclaimed, "There, thank God, I do not now owe a farthing in the world." If he had been a prudent man he would have reflected that he had not got a farthing.'

On entering Moore's parlour at Sloperton, and seeing it hung round with engraved portraits of Lord Grey, Lord John Russell, Lord Lansdowne, &c., Rogers remarked, 'So, I see you have all your *patrons* about you.' 'A good-natured man,' characteristically observed Moore, when he told the story, 'would have said *friends*.'

When he was speaking of some one's marriage in his usual tone, he was reminded that the friends of the bridegroom were very much pleased at it. Rogers replied, 'He's a fortunate man then, for his friends are pleased, and his enemies delighted.'

Whenever a disagreeable man, or one whom he dis-

liked, married a pretty woman, he would say, 'Now we shall have our revenge of him.'

He spoke to Mrs. H. one day of Lady —— with extreme admiration and apparent cordiality; he then left the room, and Mrs. H. remarked that she had never heard Rogers speak so well of anyone before. The door opened, and Rogers thrust in his head with the words, 'There are spots on the sun though.'

When a late member for a western county and his wife were stopped by banditti in Italy, Rogers used to say, 'The banditti wanted to carry off P—— into the mountains; but she flung her arms round his neck, and rather than take her with them, they let him go.'

This kind of malice was a venial offence in comparison with the cross things which he sometimes addressed to people to their faces without the shadow of a provocation; and it is these which have given rise to so many animated controversies about his goodness of heart. The discussion is strikingly analogous, in one essential quality, to the tilting match touching the colour of the shield. He presented the white side of his disposition to those he liked, and the black side to those he disliked; both likings and dislikings being often based on no sounder principle than that which proved fatal to Dr. Fell. Hence the fervent abuse of one faction, and the equally fervent laudation of another. Only what his eulogists fail to see, or unfairly refuse to admit, is, that no extent of kindness or courtesy to an object of preference is an excuse for unkindness or discourtesy to an object of antipathy, to say nothing of the social offence of an annoying or

rude remark in company. Good breeding requires delicacy of perception enough to know what is pleasing or displeasing to those with whom we mix, as well as good nature and good temper enough so to use our knowledge as never to cause an unpleasant feeling or even to revive a disagreeable association. Rogers was eminently gifted with the instinctive tact in question, but his use of it varied with his mood; and there were times when he was both wayward and exacting to an unjustifiable extent,—when all his gentler emotions were 'like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh.'

One of his female favourites had made a little dinner for him, in which, she fondly hoped, all his tastes and fancies had been consulted. After a glance round the table, he remarked that the fish was out of season.

At a bachelor dinner where the attendance was scanty, he refused the two or three things that were offered him, till the solitary waiter had left the room. 'Won't you eat anything, Mr. Rogers?' asked the host. 'I will take some of that *pie*' (pointing to a *vol-au-vent*) 'when there is anybody to give it to me.'

He bitterly repented of these two *escapades*, when, shortly afterwards, he was left out of a succession of small dinners to punish him, and was told the reason why by one of the presiding beauties. The redeeming feature was that when (as Mr. Jarndyce would say) the wind was in the east, he was no respecter of persons, and distributed raps on the knuckles without ceremony to all alike, to the strong and the weak, the big and the little, the rich and the poor, the proud and the humble.

Indeed it is no more than justice to him to say, that he was commonly conciliated by humility, and was more especially irritated by self-confident people in high health and high spirits, who took their share of the conversation, and forcibly broke in upon the monopoly of attention which he claimed or expected.

His sense of humour made Sydney Smith's fun irresistible, and it was his pride to have so distinguished a guest at his table; but there was no love lost between them, and Rogers was all the bitterer in their incidental passages of arms from the consciousness of being (in Spenserian phrase) overcrowed. Thus, at a dinner at Lord Sefton's, at which both were present, Sydney Smith, by way of falling in with the humour of the company,—mostly composed of Meltonians and patrons of the turf, offered a bet, and added, 'If I lose, I will pay at once in a cheque on Rogers, Toogood, and Company,' which was then the name of the firm. 'And it shall be paid,' said Rogers, in his bitterest tone, '*every iota of it*,'—alluding to Sydney Smith's reply, much censured for its levity, on being asked whether he believed the whole of the Thirty-nine Articles. When Rogers told the story, he justified himself on the ground that Sydney Smith 'meant to take advantage of their being in fine company to run him down as a tradesman.' When Sydney Smith mentioned it, he declared that he had fallen into an involuntary error from not calculating on the depths of human weakness, and that the notion of giving offence never so much as crossed his mind.

Rogers never quite got over the feeling of social

inequality with which he started. We once heard him exclaim, with a burst of bitterness: 'I hate the aristocracy, but I love their women.' It should be added that he had a morbid aversion for what he called 'dog and horse men.' He had omitted to observe how completely the coarseness and ignorance which was supposed, or at least declared by novelists and dramatists, to mark the country gentlemen of his youth, have been rubbed off and refined away by increased facilities of intercourse and the resulting cultivation of all classes.

Although a little jealous of Luttrell's superior fashion, Rogers's favourite amongst the wits and talkers in repute was the author of 'Letters to Julia,' and the most refined of their common contemporaries (admitting Sydney Smith's far larger grasp and higher vocation) will approve the selection. There could not be a more agreeable companion than Luttrell,—so light in hand, so graceful in manner, so conciliating in tone and gesture, with such a range of well-chosen topics, and such a fresh, sparkling, and abundant spring of fancy to play upon them. When his poem (nicknamed 'Letters from a Dandy to a Dolly') was published, a crack critic began a review of it by suggesting that the author had, as it were, cut up his gold-egg-laying goose by printing his entire stock in trade as a joker. Never critic made a greater mistake. Luttrell's sources of agreeability were inexhaustible, and they were without alloy. To him belong some of the bests *mots* recorded in 'Moore's Diary;' and Rogers accurately described his peculiar manner when he said, 'Luttrell is indeed a pleasant companion. None of the talkers whom I

meet in London society can slide in a brilliant thing with such readiness as he does.'

Rogers treated Moore much as Johnson treated Goldsmith,—rated him soundly when present for not attending better to his own interests, and did not spare him when absent, but would suffer no one else to utter a word against him. In allusion to his restlessness, Rogers used to say, 'Moore dines in one place, wishing he was dining in another place, with an opera-ticket in his pocket which makes him wish he was dining nowhere.' Moore's 'Diary' abounds with practical proofs of Rogers's unceasing liberality and unobtrusive charity. It also contains one valuable testimony of a rarer kind:—

'Rogers stayed more than a week [at Bowood, Dec. 1841]. Still fresh in all his faculties, and improved wonderfully in the only point where he ever was deficient, temper. He now gives the natural sweetness of his disposition fair play.'

Rogers was unceasingly at war with the late Lady Davy. One day at dinner she called across the table: 'Now, Mr. Rogers, I am sure you are talking about me' (not attacking, as the current version runs). 'Lady Davy,' was the retort, 'I pass my life in defending you.'

Although fashion is tolerably discriminating upon the whole, and commonly exacts an entrance-fee in sterling or current coin of some sort (either merit or celebrity) from all who are not born and bred within her hallowed precincts, still individuals may now and

then be seen there whose position is as puzzling as that of Pope's fly in amber :—

'The thing we know is neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil it got there.'

For this anomalous species, Rogers professed unmitigated contempt; and their usual resource, industrious flattery, was worse than wasted on him. One evening when, leaning on the arm of a friend, he was about to walk home from an evening party, a pretentious gentleman of this description made a desperate attempt to fasten on them, and prefaced the meditated intrusion by saying that he never liked walking alone. 'I should have thought, sir,' said Rogers, 'that no one was so well satisfied with your company as yourself.'

If he had done no more than check pushing presumption, or expose fawning insignificance, his habitual severity of comment would have caused no reflection on his memory; but it became so formidable at one time, that his guests might be seen manœuvring which should leave the room last, so as not to undergo the apprehended ordeal; and it was said of him, with more wit than truth, that he made his way in the world, as Hannibal made *his* across the Alps, with vinegar. His adoption of a practice at variance with all his avowed theories has been accounted for by the weakness of his voice, which, it was argued, induced him to compel attention by bitterness,—like the backbiters described by Lord Brougham, 'who, devoid of force to wield the sword, snatch the dagger, and steep it in venom to make it fester in the

scratch.' This solution is unjust to Rogers, who was not driven to procure listeners by such means. It, moreover, exaggerates a failing which was common to the wits of his earlier days, both in France and England. Three-fourths of the good things attributed to Voltaire, Beaumarchais, Chesterfield, Selwyn, Sheridan, Walpole, Wilkes, and their contemporaries, would have found appropriate place in the 'School for Scandal'; and before condemning Rogers on the evidence of those to whom the black side of his character was most frequently presented, we must hear those whose attention was constantly attracted to the white side.

One female reminiscent, nurtured and domesticated with genius from her childhood, writes thus:—

'I knew the kind old man for five and twenty years. I say kind advisedly, because no one did so many kind things to those who, being unable to dig, to beg are ashamed. The sharp sayings were remembered and repeated because they were so clever. There are many as bitter, no one so clever. He was essentially a gentleman, by education, by association,—his manners were perfect. Once, when breakfasting with him, upon taking our seats he called my daughter to his side, thus obliging a young man to leave his place; feeling that this was not courteous, he said, "I ask you to move because I love your parents so dearly that I feel as if you were my son."

'He not only gave freely and generously, but looked out for occasions of being kind. My father once saw him, and he asked after a mutual acquaintance—"How is K——?" the reply was—"As well as a man with nine children and a small income can be;" the next day Mr. Rogers sent him fifty pounds. A friend once asked him to assist a young

man at college; he gave immediately twenty pounds, and after leaving the house returned to say, "There is more money to be had from the same place, if wanted!" We ought to observe how much all that appears from time to time tells to his credit in the various Memoirs, &c. You find him always a peacemaker, always giving wise counsel, generous and kind.'—*Private MS.*

The author of 'The Winter's Walk,' after alluding to 'the keen point of many a famed reply,' proceeds:—

'But by a holier light thy angel reads
The unseen records of more gentle deeds,—
And by a holier light thy angel sees
The tear oft shed for humble miseries,
Th' indulgent hour of kindness stol'n away
From the free leisure of thy well-spent day,
For some poor struggling son of Genius, bent
Under the weight of heartsick discontent.

. . . . . .

And by that light's soft radiance I review
Thy unpretending kindness, calm and true,
Not to me only; but in bitterest hours
To one whom Heaven endowed with varied powers.

. . . . . .

By sorrow weakened, by disease unnerved,
Faithful at least the friend he had *not* served;
For the same voice essayed that hour to cheer
Which now sounds welcome to his grandchild's ear;
And the same hand, to aid that life's decline,
Whose gentle clasp so late was linked in mine.'

Few readers can require to be reminded of the closing scenes in the 'Life of Sheridan,' when Rogers advanced 150*l.* (not the first of the same amount, says the biographer) to procure the expiring orator the poor privilege of dying undisturbed.

'Oh, it sickens the heart to see bosoms so hollow,
And friendships so cold, in the great and high-born;
To think what a long list of titles may follow
The relics of him who died friendless and lorn.
How proud they can flock to the funeral array
Of one whom they shunned in his sickness and sorrow,
How bailiffs may seize *his* last blanket to-day
Whose pall shall be held up by nobles to-morrow.'

But it cheers the heart to see one neither great nor highborn stepping forward to prevent that last blanket from being seized; and, 'in the train of all this phalanx of Dukes, Marquises, Earls, Viscounts, Barons, Honourables, Right Honourables, Princes of the Blood, and First Officers of the State, it was not a little interesting to see walking humbly, side by side, the only two men who had not waited for the call of vanity to display itself,—Dr. Bain and Mr. Rogers.'[1]

When some one complained in Thomas Campbell's hearing, that Rogers said spiteful things: 'Borrow five hundred pounds of him,' was the comment, 'and he will never say one word against you until you want to repay him.' He told a lady (the reminiscent before quoted) that Campbell borrowed 500*l*., upon the plea that if he had that sum, it would do him a good service.[2] Three weeks afterwards he brought back the money, saying that he found it would not be prudent to risk it. 'At this time,' added Rogers, 'I knew that he was every day pressed for small sums.'

Here is an exemplarily kind action followed up by unexceptionably kind words. We could fill pages with

[1] Moore's *Life of Sheridan*.

[2] This is the loan mentioned in Moore's *Memoirs*, vol. vii.

other well-authenticated instances of his considerate generosity. They have come to light gradually; and it is a remarkable fact that, whilst he was annually giving away large sums, his name figured little in subscription lists. He may (as we have heard objected) have been acting all along rather from calculation than from impulsiveness, from head not heart. He may have been following Paley's counsel, who recommends us to cultivate our better feelings by almsgiving, if only with a view to our own self-complacency. Or he may have been simply more fortunate in his experimental benevolence than the nobleman who, on being advised to try doing a little good by way of a new pleasure, replied that he had tried it already and found no pleasure in it. To what does this analysis of motive *à la Rochefoucauld* amount after all? Surely, to seek and find happiness in doing good, is to be good. Admitting that the mere voluptuary, and the general benefactor, have each the same end, self—that 'true self-love and social are the same'—still the difference in the means employed constitutes a sufficiently wide and marked distinction between the two.

'Sir,' said Adams, 'my definition of charity is, a generous disposition to relieve the distressed.' 'There is something in that definition,' answered Mr. Peter Pounce, 'which I like well enough; it is, as you say, a disposition, and does not so much consist in the act as in the disposition to do it.' There are plenty of Peter Pounces in our society. What we want are the Allworthys, or the worldly philosophers, on whose tombstones may be read without provoking a smile of irony:

'What I spent, I had; what I gave, I have; what I saved, I lost.' We commend this epitaph to the attention of the *millionaire* who has been accused of wishing to invest the accumulations of more than half a century in one big bank-note and carry it out of the world with him. When Erskine heard that somebody had died worth 200,000*l.*, he observed, 'Well, that's a very pretty sum to begin the next world with.' Rogers had reserved for the *next* world just one-eighth of that sum, exclusive of the contents of his house,—not enough, had his income from the Bank failed, to enable him to enjoy the comforts which age, infirmity, and confirmed habits had made necessary to him in *this*.

He bore the robbery of his Bank, which might have led to very serious consequences, with great equanimity, and said it had done him good,—by the chastening effect of adversity, and by bringing out the good qualities of his friends. It was after repeating Pope's line—

'Bare the mean heart that beats beneath a star,'

that he one day mentioned, by way of qualification, the munificence and promptitude with which noble as well as simple had hurried to aid and sympathise with him. One peer (Lord Ashburton) is said to have placed 100,000*l.* at his disposal: another (Lord Lansdowne) his entire balance at his banker's, be it what it might.

The best accessible specimens of his epistolary style will be found in the eighth volume of 'Moore's Memoirs,' edited by Lord John Russell, who says that Rogers himself selected those of his letters which were to be published. They are evidently written with the

scrupulous care which marks everything he undertook; and we will answer for it that his love-letters, should they ever come to light, will bear internal evidence of having been composed on a diametrically opposite principle to that recommended by Rousseau, who says that the writer should begin without knowing what he is going to say and end without knowing what he has said. Three or four of Rogers's letters relate to 'Columbus.' He writes to consult Moore as to which of sundry very ordinary verses is the best, telling him, on one occasion, that half of a particular line has received the sanction of Sharp and Mackintosh, and anxiously requiring to be informed if he agreed with them.

One of the most pleasing of these compositions is that (p. 95) in which he gives an account of the family of a brother who had retired from the Bank with an ample fortune, and was really living the life of rural enjoyment which the poet affected to think the acme of felicity. In another (p. 79) he avows a confirmed dislike to letter-writing. The notes which he wrote in the common commerce of the world are models of conciseness and caligraphy. If ever handwriting corresponded with and betrayed character, it was his;—neat, clear, and yet not devoid of elegance. 'Will you breakfast with me to-morrow? S. R.,' was his pithy invitation to a celebrated wit and beauty. 'Won't I? H. D.' (Helen Dufferin), was the congenial response.

There is no good likeness of him. The fact is, he would never allow one to be taken. He preferred that by Lawrence, because it was the most flattering. There is one designed and drawn on stone by an amateur

artist (Lady Morgan's niece, Mrs. Geale) in 1838, which would have been excellent, had she ventured to give him his actual age at the time. Dantan's caricature bust is hardly a caricature, and for that very reason he held it in horror. One day Moore was indiscreet or malicious enough to say that a fresh stock had been sent over, and that he had seen one in a shop window. 'It is pleasant news,' said Rogers; 'and pleasant to be told of it by a friend.'

The accident which deprived him of the power of locomotion was the severest of trials to a man of his active habits and still extraordinary strength; for he delighted in walking, and thought his health depended upon the exercise he took in this way. Not long before, he had boasted of having had a breakfast party at home,—then gone to a wedding breakfast, where he returned thanks for the bridesmaids,—then to Chiswick, where he was presented to an imperial highness,—dined out,—gone to the Opera,—looked in at a ball, and walked home,—all within the compass of fourteen hours. 'When I first saw him after his fall,' writes the lady already quoted, 'I found him lying on his bed, which was drawn near the bedroom window, that he might look upon the Park. Taking my hand, he kissed it, and I felt a tear drop on it, and that was all the complaint or regret that he ever expressed. Never did he allude to it to me, nor, I believe, to anyone.'

One day, between six and seven, when he was just going to dinner, hearing a knock at the door, he desired his faithful and attached servant, Edmund, to say, Not at home. 'Who was it?' he inquired.

E. 'Colonel ——, sir.' *R.* 'And who is Colonel ——?' *E.* 'The gentleman who upset you, sir, and caused your accident.' *R.* 'It is an agreeable recollection, did he come to refresh it?' *E.* 'Oh, sir, he calls very often to inquire for you.' *R.* 'Does he? then, if he calls again, don't let him in, *and don't tell me of it.*' The gallant officer was (at worst) the innocent cause of the mishap; for as his brougham was passing at an ordinary pace, Rogers, who was about to cross, suddenly checked himself, lost his balance, and fell with his hip against the kerb-stone.

He used to say that he had never enjoyed two consecutive days' good health till he was past fifty; and he rather coveted than avoided allusions to his age. On one occasion, in his eighty-eighth year, he was accidentally left alone in the dark with a lady, who pretended to think her reputation in danger. 'Ah, my dear, if sweet seventy-eight would come again! *mais ces beaux jours sont passés.*'

He told gracefully, with his usual deliberate simplicity and studied artlessness, a little incident of the same period. 'They were playing at forfeits. Miss S. had to pay a kiss.' 'Oh, it was to my uncle; so I paid it gladly.' 'Suppose it had been to me?' 'I should have paid it *cheerfully.*' Was not that a bitter-and-sweet adverb?'

When some one was speaking of a fine old man before Swift, he exclaimed, in a spirit of melancholy foreboding, 'There's no such thing as a fine old man: if either his head or his heart had been worth anything, they would have worn him out long ago.' Till near

ninety, Rogers was a striking exception to this rule. He then gradually dropped into that state, mental and bodily, which raises a reasonable doubt whether prolonged life be a blessing or a curse —

'Omni
Membrorum damno major dementia, quæ nec
Nomina servorum, nec vultum agnoscit amici
Cum queis præteritâ cœnavit nocte, nec illos
Quos genuit, quos eduxit.'

Although his impressions of long past events were as fresh as ever, he forgot the names of his relations and oldest friends whilst they were sitting with him, and told the same stories to the same people two or three times over in the same interview. But there were frequent glimpses of intellect in all its original brightness, of tenderness, of refinement, and of grace. 'Once driving out with him,' says a female correspondent, 'I asked him after a lady whom he could not recollect. He pulled the check-string, and appealed to his servant. "Do I know Lady Morgan?" The reply was, "Yes, sir." This was a painful moment to us both. Taking my hand, he said, "Never mind, my dear, I am not yet reduced to stop the carriage and ask if I know *you*."'

To another female friend, who was driving out with him shortly after, he said, 'Whenever you are angry with one you love, think that that dear one might die that moment. Your anger will vanish at once.'

During the last four or five years he was constantly expatiating on the advantages of marriage. 'It was a proud, a blessed privilege,' he would repeat (forgetting that

it was not confined to married people), 'to be the means, under Providence, of clothing an immortal soul in clay.' He introduced and pursued this theme without respect to persons, and not unfrequently recommended matrimony to married people who would have lent a readier ear to a proposal of separation or divorce. In explanation of the rumours circulated from time to time in his younger days respecting his own attempts to confirm precept by example, he said, 'that whenever his name had been coupled with that of a single lady, he had thought it his duty to give out that he had been refused.' On his regretting that he had not married, because then he should have had a nice woman to care for him, it was suggested,—'How do you know she would not have cared for somebody else?'—an awkward doubt at all times.

His own version of his nearest approximation to the nuptial tie was, that, when a young man, he admired and sedulously sought the society of the most beautiful girl he then, and still, thought he had ever seen. At the end of the London season, at a ball, she said: 'I am going to-morrow to Worthing. Are you coming there?' He did not go. Some months afterwards, being at Ranelagh, he saw the attention of every one drawn towards a large party, in the centre of which was a lady on the arm of her husband. Stepping forward to see this wonderful beauty, he found it was his love. She merely said: 'You never came to Worthing.'

He latterly took great delight in hearing the Bible read, especially the sublime passages, and those of moral beauty. This kind office was frequently per-

formed for him by a lady as much distinguished by her private virtues as formerly by qualities which enchanted the public.[1] In the course of religious conversation arising out of her readings, she suggested to him the subject of the Sacrament. After due consideration, he expressed himself desirous of receiving it from his old friend, the Dean of St. Paul's. The Dean, after some conference with him, consented to his request, and accordingly administered the sacramental rite to Rogers, his sister (then, like her brother, in a state of great bodily infirmity), the lady above mentioned, her daughter, and one other person for whom he expressed very sincere affection.

In the case of most men over whom the grave had closed so recently, we should have refrained from such minuteness of personal detail, however curious or illustrative. But the veil had been removed from the private life of Rogers long before we approached the sanctuary; and we are not responsible for the profanation, if it be one. His habits, his mode of life, his predilections, his aversions, his caustic sayings, his benevolent actions, have been treated like common property as far back as the living generation can remember. They have been discussed in all circles, and have occasionally appeared (with varying degrees of accuracy) in print.

Now that monarchs have left off changing their shirts at crowded *levées*, we should be puzzled to name any contemporary celebrity who, whether he liked it or not, had been so much or so constantly before the public as Rogers. He knew everybody, and everybody knew

[1] Lady Becher (Miss O'Neill).

him. He spoke without reserve to the first comer, and the chance visitor was admitted to his intimacy as unwarily as the tried friend. This argued a rare degree of conscious rectitude and honourable self-reliance; and in estimating his character, in balancing the final account of his merits and demerits, too much stress cannot be laid on the searching nature of the ordeal he has undergone. Choose out the wisest, brightest, noblest of mankind, and how many of them could bear to be thus pursued into the little corners of their lives—'all their faults observed, set in a note-book, learned and conned by rote'? Most assuredly, if the general scope and tendency of their conduct be no worse, they may, one and all,—to borrow the impressive language of Erskine,—'walk through the shadow of death, with all their faults about them, with as much cheerfulness as in the common path of life.' But if great virtues may not atone for small frailties, or kind deeds for unkind words, 'they must call upon the mountains to cover them, for which of them can present, for Omniscient examination, a pure, unspotted, and faultless course?'

FREDERIC VON GENTZ.

[FROM THE EDINBURGH REVIEW FOR JANUARY, 1863.]

Aus dem Nachlass VARNHAGEN VON ENSE. *Tagebücher von* FRIEDRICH VON GENTZ. *Mit einem Vor- und Nach-Worte von* VARNHAGEN VON ENSE. Leipzig: 1861.

WE invite attention to the life and writings of Gentz, for reasons widely different from those which commonly induce the analysis of a character or the review of a biography. He is not a specimen of a period, an illustration of a calling, or an example of a class. He is in no sense a representative man. He stands alone in his peculiar and personal description of celebrity; presenting, we believe, the solitary instance of a political aspirant achieving, along with enduring reputation, a position of social equality with statesmen and nobles, in an aristocratic country and under a despotic government, by his pen. He starts with no advantage of birth or fortune, and he never acquires wealth: he produces no work of creative genius: he does not intrigue, cringe, or flatter: he does not get on by patronage: he is profuse without being venal: he is always on the side which he thinks right: yet we find him, almost from the commencement to the very close of his career, the companion

and counsellor of the greatest and most distinguished of his contemporaries, the petted member of the most brilliant and exclusive of European circles. In early manhood he had earned the hatred of Napoleon and the friendship of Pitt. In declining age he was at once the trusted friend of Metternich, the correspondent of Mackintosh, the Platonic adorer of Rahel, and the favoured lover of Fanny Elssler. How often might he have exclaimed—

> 'One glorious hour of crowded life
> Is worth an age without a name.'

Excitements and enjoyments of all sorts—from flattered vanity and gratified love to the proud consciousness of European fame and influence—follow each other in rapid succession, or come together thronging with intoxicating intensity. Beyle says of himself that he required three or four cubic feet of new ideas per day, as a steamboat requires coal. What would have been a reasonable allowance for Gentz? How did he win his way to that giddy pinnacle, which was to him—whatever it may seem to cooler heads or less susceptible temperaments—the quintessence of enjoyment, the crowning test and token of success? How or where did he find health, strength, time, mind, or money for the wear and tear of the contest, the lavish pecuniary expenditure and the reckless intellectual waste of the strife?

Speaking of the position won by Sheridan, Moore asserts that 'by him who has not been born among the great, this can only be achieved by politics. In that arena, which they look upon as their own, the legislature

of the land, let a man of genius but assert his supremacy, —at once all barriers of reserve and pride give way, and he takes by right a station at their side which a Shakspeare or a Newton would but have enjoyed by courtesy.' There was no legislature of the land open to Gentz; and, although he has often been called the Burke of Germany, no fair parallel can be drawn between him and Burke or Sheridan in England, or Thiers and Guizot in France. With rare exception, political writers, as such, have enjoyed no social superiority over the miscellaneous throng of authors in any country: not unfrequently the precise contrary has been their lot; and when Paul Louis Courier was apostrophised as *Vil Pamphlétaire*, the phrase, he tells us, brought down an accumulated mass of prejudice upon his head. The Augustan age of Anne presents, we believe, the only period of party warfare or civil dissension during which the writer or journalist ranked with the statesman; and the terms on which Swift lived with Oxford and Bolingbroke come nearest to those on which Gentz associated with the leading members of European congresses.

'The assistance of Swift,' says Scott, 'was essential to the existence of the ministry, and ample confidence was the only terms on which it could be procured.' The assistance of Gentz was essential to the cause of European independence from 1797 to 1815, and eminently useful to the cause of enlightened Conservatism till his death. It was he who clothed in the loftiest and most impressive language the views and principles of those who, with varying fortunes, perseveringly bore up against the sustained and oft-renewed efforts of the French despot to

domineer over and humiliate their common fatherland. It was he who suggested the most effective means of making head against the foe; who infused fresh spirit and energy into their counsels when they flagged. We shall see that he was something widely different from the ready penman, clerk, or secretary, who finds apt words for the sense (or nonsense) that may be dictated to him. Being generally present at the preliminary discussions, he was seldom the exponent of a policy which he had not framed or modified, and never of a policy which he disapproved. He is therefore justly and happily termed by Varnhagen, '*dieser Schriftsteller-Staatsmann*' (this writer-statesman).

Perfect equality, if not superiority, is necessarily conceded to a master-mind employed in this fashion; and Gentz was one of those genial natures that irresistibly attract confidence. He was emphatically what the Neapolitans call *simpatico*; his tone and manner were electrical; and whenever he was brought into contact with men or women of genius and sensibility, a cordial intimacy was the result. Few things are more striking in the 'Remains' of Mrs. Trench than the easy matter-of-course way in which, a day or two after her arrival at a capital or *Residenz*, she becomes a courted inmate of the best houses. Precisely the same problem is suggested by Gentz's diaries; and the solution of it may be found in her recorded impressions when they met at Berlin in 1800, and she finds him 'one of those who seem to impart a portion of their own endowments; for you feel your mind elevated whilst in his society.' There is a freemasonry between highly endowed and

highly refined persons which sweeps away at once all thought of social inequality; and if no inferiority is felt on one side, no superiority will be even momentarily assumed upon the other, whatever the domain of intellect in which the purely personal elevation may have been won. The phenomenon is not peculiar to the political horizon.

'Mr. Harley,' says Swift, in the 'Journal to Stella,' 'desired me to dine with him again to-day; but I refused him, for I fell out with him yesterday, and will not see him again till he makes me amends.' The cause of quarrel was the offer of a banknote of fifty pounds, which Swift, who was looking to high Church preferment for his reward, indignantly refused. Gentz, who could be adequately rewarded in no other manner, and was never in circumstances to work gratuitously, affected no delicacy in this respect. He took money, right and left, from everyone who resorted to his pen, or who benefited, or hoped to benefit, by his services. We shall find him repeatedly receiving large sums or valuable presents in various shapes, from England, Russia, and France. His private friends, also, were frequently laid under contribution, and Varnhagen introduces the member of a wealthy banking firm giving vent to an illustrative lament over his grave:—'That was a friend, indeed! I shall never have such another. He has cost me large sums—it would not be believed how large—for he had only to write upon a bill what he wished to have, and he had it instantly; but since he is no longer there, I see, for the first time, what we have lost, and I would give three times as much to call him back to life.'

Alderman Beckford used to say that he lost enormously by speculating on the information he received from Lord Chatham; and it may be doubted whether this accommodating banker was remunerated by intelligence. It is admitted on all hands that Gentz, although especially conversant with financial subjects, never gambled in the funds, and this is one main topic relied on by his apologists. They, moreover, assert with truth that he never, either in writing or speaking, belied his honest convictions; and they plausibly contend that he received in the long run less than many public men of far inferior desert were paid in salaries. They might point to Burke's pension, or to the income settled on Fox by his dissentient followers, or to the 12,000*l.* raised by private subscription for Pitt. But these great men would, one and all, stand better with posterity if they had never been subjected to pecuniary obligations; and there is an obvious difference between the acceptance of a pension or a loan and an habitual reliance on precarious and irregular supplies.

'Let all your views in life,' writes Junius to Woodfall, 'be directed to a solid, however moderate, independence: without it no man can be happy, nor even honest.' Gentz remained honest, as this world goes; but his peace of mind was constantly disturbed by his embarrassments, and, unfounded as it was, he must have writhed under the taunt which Napoleon hurled at him in one of his vengeful bulletins, as a mercenary scribe. There have been men of genius in all ages who could never be taught the true value and proper use of money; taking it carelessly with one hand, and flinging it away as

carelessly with the other. They were not more ready to borrow than to give or lend: if they expected other people's purses to be open, their own were open in return —only, unhappily, there was commonly nothing in them. Fielding, Savage, Sheridan, Coleridge, Godwin, and Leigh Hunt are well-known examples of this peculiarity. Gentz was another; and the best that can be said for him is that, not caring for money for its own sake, he lay under little temptation to procure it by unworthy compliances, whilst his unconsciousness of degradation saved him from one of the worst effects of pecuniary obligation, the forfeiture of self-respect.

There is no regular life of Gentz, nor any complete edition of his writings. A spirited biographical sketch has been supplied by Varnhagen von Ense,[1] who, whilst fully appreciating his genius and making large allowances for his aberrations, obviously differed from him in tastes and habits, as well as in personal and political predilections, and never lived much or intimately with him at any time. He has also been made the subject of many animated attacks, and as animated defences or apologies. To him, indeed, was first applied the description which, with the change of nation, was adopted by O'Connell for himself—that he was the best abused man in Germany. Two editions of his works have been commenced and left incomplete; and a third was planned under auspices which bade fair to render it an enduring monument of his fame. The Baron von Prokesch, the present (1863) representative of Austria at the Porte, was from early youth the constant com-

[1] 'Vermischte Schriften.' Zweiter Theil, 1843.

panion and enthusiastic admirer of Gentz, working with him, reading with him, attending political consultations with him, and sharing equally the amusements of his lighter hours and the grave cares of statesmanship. The Baron is a distinguished traveller and author, as well as a highly-accomplished diplomatist, and had every imaginable qualification for what would have been to him a labour of love. He was encouraged to undertake the editorship by Prince Metternich, and was actually engaged in the requisite preparations, when the Austrian Police, or Home Office, interfered, and the design was perforce abandoned.[1]

The materials, had he been permitted the free use of them, would have been abundant, and of the richest quality. On Gentz's death, in pursuance of a well-known German practice, the Austrian Government took possession of the whole of his papers, public and private, which lay within reach of the officials. Amongst these were many of the day-books, or diaries, which he had kept with scrupulous minuteness from the time when he began to rise into celebrity. Some are now in the possession of his friend, who was so good as to allow the writer a cursory inspection of them; and the 'Tagebücher,' published by Varnhagen von Ense in 1861, is an abridgment, by Gentz himself, of his diaries from April, 1800, to the end of 1814, and for a few detached weeks of 1819. He burnt the original note-books for these years, after extracting

[1] *Ex relatione* Baron von Prokesch, with whom the writer had the advantage of talking over the career and character of Gentz at Constantinople in September, 1862.

what he thought worth preserving and saw no reason to suppress; and it was his intention, had he lived, to deal in the same manner with the rest. He was fortunately endowed with a proud self-consciousness, and felt that he could afford to be frank. The result is, that many of the entries preserved by him are confessions and self-communings rather than memoranda of events: he has left their freshness unimpaired; and, alternating with literary, political, and social triumphs, appear the frequently-recurring proofs of his weaknesses and his faults.

Frederic Gentz was born in Breslau, May 2, 1764. His father had a situation in the Mint; his mother was an Ancillon. They had four children, and he was the youngest of two sons. His education began at the town school, and on his father's removal to Berlin, as Mint Director, he was sent to a Gymnasium there, and afterwards to the University of Frankfort-on-the-Oder. With the exception of a solitary success in recitation, he showed no sign of talent, spirit, or capacity. His family set him down as a dunce; and the good qualities he was admitted to possess were not of a nature to advance him in the world. He was good-natured, kind-hearted, and generous to excess. His sisters got all they wanted from him for the asking, and so, it seems, did his associates; for as regards lending and borrowing, the boy was literally the father of the man. It was not until he attended Kant's lectures at Königsberg, in his twentieth or twenty-first year, that he displayed the least desire of distinction or consciousness of power. Then a sudden change came over him: it was like the

breaking up of a frost, or the warming of Pygmalion's statue into life. When he returned to Berlin, in 1785, it was difficult to retrace the indolent, commonplace lad who had been the despair of his parents, in the clever, lively, accomplished, and aspiring young man who was now their pride and their hope. If the first inspiration, however, came from Kant, the great metaphysician did not exercise his usual cloud-compelling influence over his young disciple, whose clear, practical understanding, once unsealed, grappled eagerly with the tangible and useful in knowledge, the refining and elevating in art. Besides mastering the Greek and Roman classics, he acquired so perfect a knowledge of French as to compose and converse in it as easily as in his native tongue, and a sufficient familiarity with English to enable him to translate Burke.

How and at what particular period he obtained his wonderful familiarity with some English subjects which till recently were imperfectly understood in England, especially our commercial system and our finance, is a puzzle to us. All we know is that his was one of those gifted minds which accumulate treasures whilst they appear to be picking up pebbles or trifling with straws, and can devote night after night, begun in dissipation or frivolity, to hard study or patient investigation. On his arrival in Berlin, one of the most brilliant and popular members of the gay world, attracted by congeniality of tastes and pursuits, introduced him to the best society, in which he speedily became a favourite; and before he had well time to look about him, he was involved in a giddy whirl of what is conventionally

called pleasure, besides intrigues or love affairs, which are sad consumers of time. The state of his heart and mind at this epoch may be collected from the earliest of his published letters 'To Elizabeth,' the wife of Councillor Graun during the correspondence, and afterwards of the poet Stageman. At the date of the first, February 12, 1785, she was in her nineteenth year, separated from her husband, very handsome, very clever, and both ready and qualified to condole with young gentlemen suffering from the prevalent malady, which, for want of a fitter term, may be called Wertherism. Its principal symptoms were a morbid craving for excitement, and the treatment of marriage as a kind of legalised slavery:

> 'Love, free as air, at sight of human ties,
> Spreads its light wings and in a moment flies.'

Marriages made in heaven were understood to supersede those made on earth; *i.e.* if the mundane did not coincide with and confirm the spiritual tie.

Gentz gave the lady ample occasion for the employment of her powers of soothing; for in less than two years he makes her the confidant of two passions, each of which was to last for ever, and uniformly addresses her with a warmth which might lead unsophisticated readers to suspect that she was all along the object of a third:

'No, my dear, my beloved friend! Friendships, such as ours was, are not to be reckoned by half-years. How willingly I dreamed, in the glad still hours of a sweet enthusiasm, that this life was too short for it,—and now it is to be destroyed in six weeks? Not so. A friend, such as you

were, I shall never meet with again in the entire current of my years, and I am to know you in the same world, and yet lost to me. Help me, save me from this hateful doubt.'

Madame Graun is beloved by a gentleman named Le Noble; and Gentz, after urgently pressing on her the moral duty of consulting her adorer's happiness as well as her own, recommends the careful study of 'La Nouvelle Héloïse' by way of preparation for the task. He himself, at this time, was paying honourable court to a damsel named Celestine, who, after entering into an engagement with him, backed out; wisely and fortunately enough, for it would have been little less than a miracle for a man with his volatility and impressibility to make a good husband. The experiment was soon afterwards tried by a lady who is briefly described by Varnhagen as *née* Gilly, and it turned out as might have been anticipated. Fletcher, Byron's favourite servant, naively remarked, that every woman could manage my lord, except my lady. Almost every woman was acceptable to Gentz, except his wife. From the domestic arrangements for the meditated marriage with Celestine, we learn that, with his father's assistance, he hoped to make up an income of 800 dollars. In 1786 he was appointed private secretary to the Royal General-Directorium (whatever that may be), and gave such satisfaction to his superiors that he was speedily promoted to the higher grade of *Kriegsrath* (war-councillor).

Gentz, like Mackintosh and many other men of mark who afterwards became firm opponents of revolutionary opinions, looked hopefully at first on the great

events of 1789. But the excesses of democracy, and dread of the military despotism to which they were obviously leading, awoke him from his brief dream of human perfectibility, and his literary career commenced, in 1793, with a translation of Burke's famous 'Essay on the French Revolution.' In 1794 he published a translation, with preface and remarks, of Mallet du Pan's book on the same subject; and in 1795 a translation, with remarks and additions, of a work in the same spirit by Mounier. On the accession of Frederic William III. to the throne of Prussia, in November, 1797, Gentz ventured on the bold and (for a Prussian official) unprecedented step of addressing what he termed a *Sendschreiben* (missive) to his new sovereign on his rights, duties, and opportunities. It is a pamphlet of thirty-two pages, somewhat in the style of Bolingbroke's 'Patriot King.' He was a frequent contributor, as an avowed champion of reaction, to periodicals; and, amongst other articles of note, wrote one which might more properly be denominated an essay against Robespierre and St. Just.

In January, 1795, he founded and edited the *Neue Deutsche Monatsschrift* (New German Monthly), which lasted only four months; and in January, 1799, in co-operation with Professor Ancillon and with funds supplied by a minister, he established the *Historisches Journal*, which was continued monthly till the end of 1800; after which it appeared every three or four months, till its expiration in 1802. His own contributions were mostly of a comprehensive and sustained character, composed with the view of being subsequently

republished as books. One series of articles 'On the Origin and Character of the War against the French Revolution,' was composed with express reference to Great Britain; and before the end of the century he had visited England, and formed intimate relations, based on mutual respect and confidence, with (amongst many others) Mackintosh, Lord Grenville, and Pitt. For more than twenty years he remained in constant and confidential communication with the leading members of successive English ministries, who, besides resorting to him for information touching continental matters, made free use of his pen in drawing up papers on English taxation, paper-money, and finance. From 1800 inclusive, we are enabled to track his progress, step by step, in the diaries; and, through the kindness of Baron von Prokesch, we have the additional aid of a note-book, in Gentz's handwriting, entitled, '*Liste générale des Personnes que j'ai vues depuis le commencement de l'année* 1800,' headed by the following 'Observations:'—

'The commencement of the year 1800, or rather the end of 1799, is the epoch at which the sphere of my *liaisons* has rapidly and considerably increased. I had very interesting ones before this epoch, and I propose to form a table of them apart; but it is since 1800 that I have properly begun to figure on the stage of the world, that I have constantly lived with men of all classes, and that society has become one of the principal objects of my occupations, of my studies, and of my enjoyments.'

This list, he explains, does not contain ephemeral, commonplace, or insignificant rencounters or acquaint-

ances: 'it is absolutely meant only to form the base and furnish the elements of a table of social relations and social commerce, properly so called.' A list of correspondents is added; and the degrees of intimacy are indicated by marks prefixed to the names—a cross expressing familiar acquaintance, and an asterisk intimacy. Headed by the King and Queen, the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence, it includes all the personages of note, English and foreign, then resident or sojourning in London.

The published diary begins on the 14th April, 1800, characteristically enough:—

'On the 14th of April an agreeable surprise. The Jew-Elder Hirsch brought me fifty thalers for drawing up I know not what representation. On the 28th of May, received through Baron Brüdener, as a present from the Emperor of Russia, a watch set with (small) brilliants.'

The word (small) before brilliants would seem to show that, in appreciating honorary gifts, he acted on the same principle as Dr. Parr, who, when consulted about the design of a gold ring destined for him, said he cared more for the weight than the form.

The next entry relates to the first English remittance:

'Received a written communication through Garlicke from Lord Grenville, together with a donation of 500*l.* sterling, the first of this kind! (The note of admiration is his own.)

'*February.*—Very remarkable that, on the one side, Lord Carysfort charged me with the translation into French of the published "English Notes against Prussia," and shortly

afterwards Count Haugwitz with the translation into German of the "Prussian Notes against England."

'Towards the end of March, finished the book on the "Origin of the Revolutionary War,"[1] and formed the resolution to answer that of Hauterive. This work was undertaken in Schömberg.'

The work of Hauterive was a semi-official attack on England, and its complete refutation by so masterly and well-informed a writer as Gentz, was a valuable service not merely to the libelled country, but to Europe. It was translated into English, with an able preface, by a gentleman who afterwards became a member of the British Cabinet.[2]

'*April.*—Deep emotion at the death of a dog. A proof how strongly everything belonging to domestic ties, amidst all dissipation, affected me. News of the death of the Emperor Paul. Impression which, first the universal joy and later the fearful publication of this news, made on me.'

His mode of life at this time, in its wild recklessness, resembles that of Savage, who often spent in a night's revelry the borrowed money which should have saved him from privation and annoyance for weeks. Thus, after losing seventy-four louis-d'or at play, Gentz manages with difficulty to raise seventy more by pledging a manuscript, and loses the money the same evening at the same house. In the midst of all these follies, he

[1] 'Ueber den Ursprung und Character des Krieges gegen die Französische Revolution. Berlin: 1801. Republished from the *Historisches Journal.*'

[2] 'The State of Europe Before and After the French Revolution.' Being an answer to *L'Etat de la France à la Fin de l'An VIII.* Translated by John Charles Herries, Esq.: 1802.'

writes, Nov. 14, 'I resolve to travel to Weimar with my brother Henry, and remain there fourteen days.' He went and spent three weeks there, mostly in the Grand Ducal circle, and (what he valued more) in daily, almost hourly intercourse with Goethe, Schiller, Herder, Wieland, and Kotzebue; whilst flattered vanity, and favoured if not successful love, kept adding to the intoxication and the charm. His enchantress was a young court beauty, Amalie d'Imhoff, who afterwards acquired some celebrity as a poet. On one occasion he writes: 'I passed the morning at Mlle. d'Imhoff's; it was a remarkable morning—hours which I shall remember to my dying day. I never experienced a sensation equal to that which enchanted me this morning. I even fancied I saw approaching the moment of a great internal revolution.' On another: 'I read and wrote till eleven. I then went to Mlle. d'Imhoff's, where I again enjoyed all that is fine, pure, and grand in the commerce of mankind.'

This visit to Weimar having revealed to him how much elevated and improving pleasure may be derived from the intellect and imagination, apart from the indulgence of the senses, he forms some excellent resolutions, which are forgotten almost immediately after his return to the scene of his repented errors.

'Effect of the resolutions at Weimar. On the 25th of December I lost all I had at hazard, so I was obliged to run about the whole of the following day to raise a few dollars for Christmas presents. On the 1st of January (1803), I sup and play at one Buisson's, go home about one, *but forget the house-key, and pass the night elsewhere.* I could not

help noting down that, after the resolution of December, it was an odd enough manner of beginning the new year. Yet I went on writing letters of from six to eight sheets each to Amalie Imhoff.

'On the 26th of January I meet, at Mlle. Levin's, Mlle. Eigensatz, and she pleases me.'

Christel Eigensatz was an actress of considerable personal attractions: his brief acquaintance with her formed the same sort of episode in his principal love affair as the adventure of Tom Jones with Mrs. Waters formed in *his*; and the fair Amalie probably resented it in the same manner as Sophia. In February he received a 'tolerably large' remittance through Lord Carysfort.

'*February* 21.—As I returned home, about two in the morning, I found a letter from my wife, which "has decided the fate of my life." And the next day our resolution was taken probably to separate. This, however, did not prevent me from going to a ball at Ponstat's to play *trente-et-quarante*, &c.

'*April* 5.—Is it credible? The most urgent, the most sensible of my miseries was the impossibility of making a present to Christel, who had her benefit to-day. *And, on the same day, fate wafts to the wretch who could write this down a remittance of a thousand pounds from England.*'

Well might he exclaim, as he does in a subsequent entry, 'Maintenant c'est le délire complet!' He had just self-command and discretion enough to see that such a life must be broken off at any price; and he came suddenly to the resolution of leaving Berlin, with all its ties, regular and irregular; a resolution doubtless

precipitated by the pressure of his debts, the remonstrances of his family, and the (not always) mute reproaches of his wife. With some difficulty, he obtained leave of absence, having not yet thrown up his employments; and on the 19th of May he writes: 'I take leave of my wife; and on the 20th, at three, I leave Berlin with Adam Müller, never to see it again.'

The biography of men of letters teems with examples of similar incapacity to resist temptation: and one of them, himself deeply culpable, emphatically proclaims, as one of the worst effects of illicit passion:

> 'I waive the quantum of the sin,
> The hazard o' concealing,
> But, oh! it hardens all within,
> And petrifies the feeling.'

The disorders of his life did not deaden the sensibilities or cloud the intellect of Gentz: and one reason was that he never for a moment shut his eyes to the true nature and tendency of his conduct, nor lost his relish for purifying studies and companionship. Our readers will readily recal the scene where Charles Fox, after sitting up all night at Brookes's, and losing all he had at hazard, is found the next morning quietly reading Euripides. Gentz, in similar circumstances, could turn with equal ease and gratification to a favourite classic, or speculate with Adam Müller on those sublime mysteries which puzzled Milton's angels. Nor does he appear to have ceased gaining fame and money as a writer at the period when his phrenzied pursuit of excitement was most likely to interfere with his literary labours.

His abandonment of the Prussian service and his naturalisation in Austria, were the gradual and unforeseen result of circumstances. He was neither lured by promises nor fettered by pledges, when, six weeks after his departure from Berlin with Müller, he arrived in Vienna with Frohberg, a companion of a widely different cast of mind; for they played piquet all the way from Iglau:—

'I myself (he says) do not know the precise history of my settlement in Vienna. The inconceivable meagreness of the journal leaves me in doubt. It seems that on the one hand Landriani (through Colloredo and Cobentzl), on the other Fasbender, had a hand in it. The latter persuaded me, the very day he presented me to the Archduke Charles, to write a kind of memoir, offering my services,—the only positive step I ever took. The fate of this memoir is unknown to me. After ten or twelve days, I am taken by Colloredo to an audience with the emperor, who, I distinctly remember, showed no desire to take me into his service. Nevertheless, five days afterwards (Sept. 6th), Cobentzl sent for me, and informed me that the emperor engaged me as counsellor (*Rath*), with a salary of 5,000 gulden (about 200*l.*).'

In another man we should be apt to term this ignorance of the turning-point of his life affected; but Gentz was so thoroughly the slave of the moment, so prone to let one range of feelings or impressions absorb or replace another, that imperfect recollection or entire forgetfulness of past events, simply because they were past, was natural to him; and the correspondence relating to the transactions in question is so honourable to him, that he could have had no imaginable motive

for suppressing it. The communication of the 6th having been put into official shape, he addressed a manly and eloquent letter to the King of Prussia, requesting not merely his discharge, but some gracious expressions of a nature to repel reproach. The discharge was granted and was accompanied by an assurance that His Majesty, 'in reference to his merits as a writer, coincided in the general approbation which he had so honourably acquired by them.'

One of the charges subsequently brought against Gentz was, that he had bartered 'the young, aspiring Prussia, with its pregnant future,' against 'superannuated, saintish, Romish-imperial Austria.' Admitting (what we should be slow to admit) that Prussia came up to this description as regards her internal policy at any time, her external policy was then to the last degree vacillating and devoid of high principle. She soon afterwards became the complacent ally of France and condescended to accept Hanover for her subserviency. What would have been the position of Gentz had he remained in her service? He must have laid aside his pen altogether or have used it to palliate a course of public conduct which he reprobated and despised. This dilemma he evidently foresaw; and the more or less of liberality discoverable in the domestic administration of Prussia is nothing to the point. What he saw and preferred in Austria was the firm friend of constitutional England and the determined enemy of revolutionary France. The Austrian statesmen with whom he co-operated were those who successively presided over the department of foreign affairs, and it will be seen that

the cordiality of his co-operation was uniformly proportioned to their increasing or diminishing hostility to his own arch foe, Napoleon. Moreover, before Gentz can fairly be made responsible for the despotic and reactionary character of the Imperial *régime*, it should be shown that the ministers he was supposed to influence had power to modify it; the truth being that the home policy of Austria was under the guidance of a totally different set of men from those whose names are familiarly known to Europe as representing her in foreign courts and congresses. Referring to this particular period, he sets down:

'What more I did at this time, how I meant to live, how I had lived till then, all is now a mystery to me. In Dresden I mixed as usual with the fashionable world, with Metternich, Elliot, and other people of distinction; and, quite casually, Elliot proposed to me on the 26th to travel with him to England. So far as I recollect, Metternich gave me a bill on England for 100*l.*, and Armfeldt, from whom the evening before I had won 200 dollars, a similar one. On the 1st of October I travelled alone from Dresden to Weimar. There I lose forty louis d'ors to the Duke; send my servant with an endless quantity of letters to Berlin, and wait for Elliot, who arrives punctually on the 6th.'

Mr. Elliot, whose witty replies to Frederic the Great have won him a permanent place in the annals of diplomacy, was then English minister at Dresden.[1] All we learn of their journey is that Gentz was 'auf's

[1] The career of this remarkable man has since been made familiar by an interesting *Memoir of The Right Hon. Hugh Elliot.*

äusserste tyrannisirt' (excessively tyrannised over) by his companion; which perhaps was the best thing that could happen to a traveller of his wavering mood, ever ready to linger on the road or step aside to gather flowers. The list of distinguished persons by whom he was received in England shows that he turned his visit to good account; and the late Mr. T. Grenville is reported to have called him the best talker he ever heard; adding: 'I had known Gentz intimately at Berlin. When he came to England he immediately called on me, and earnestly desired to be made personally acquainted with Fox, my brother Lord Grenville, and the other great men of the day. Accordingly I asked them to dinner with him. They came, and were so charmed with the Prussian statesman, that they declared they should be most happy to dine with him again at my house the very next day.' Yet between Fox and Gentz there was no bond of sympathy besides that which almost invariably exists between superior men of all parties. Whilst in England he received a letter from Count Stadion, hastening his return on grounds shrewdly divined and pointedly stated:

'So far as I can see, people are behaving very well towards you here (Vienna). They tell me that the terms in which the King has granted your discharge are very satisfactory; and there is much less clamour and gossip about you than I apprehended. It is not in the first moment of your

By the Countess of Minto, 1868. The repartees attributed to him are discussed in *The Quarterly Review* for October, 1868, pp. 349–350.

settlement in Vienna that the mines will be sprung against you. Jealousy and envy commonly reason too well to discharge their shafts at the time when all the *éclat* of your reputation, and all the pleasure of having gained you to our interests, would serve you as a buckler. It is later, when people have got accustomed to see you every day, to observe you *en robe de chambre*, that you must be on your guard. It is then that those who wish to injure you will have found your weak and your strong side, and tried to set their machinations at work.'

He still lingered, and passed some weeks on his return at Weimar and Dresden, as if instinctively apprehensive of his reception at Vienna; where he finds, on arriving, that his time had not yet come, the Imperial policy being in too wavering a condition to need a counsellor, coadjutor, or penman of his positive ways of thinking and unyielding temper. 'My first interview with Count Cobentzl, and especially with Collenbach, might have shown me that the stage of genuine activity was not yet open to me. I was certainly treated with great respect, but at the same time with mistrust and jealousy; and, in reality, men like these could not well act otherwise towards me.' In the meantime he mixed much in society, and went on forming new and valuable acquaintance. 'Almost the only thing,' he says, 'which I then carried on with eagerness, was my correspondence with England, particularly with Vansittart.' This led to his forming a close intimacy with Sir Arthur Paget, a congenial spirit in many ways, of whom we consequently hear a great deal, not always to the credit of the pair, whose common subjects of interest were play and gallantry much oftener

than diplomacy or politics.[1] At Paget's he met Le Maistre:

'Wonderful is it that this fact was first brought back to my recollection by my old diary. The circumstance that I had seen this great man had entirely escaped my memory; so little impression had he then made upon me. How did that come to pass? I must, however, have held him very high as the author of the *Considérations sur la Révolution*. Was I spoilt by the everyday life of great circles, or too surfeited with diplomatic prattle?'

Another memorable acquaintance was Lord Brougham, who came to Vienna in December, 1804, and, although he had not yet entered Parliament, was rapidly rising into fame. 'Brougham came to Vienna, and sought me with much interest. I did not like his cynical nature, but I could not resist his originality, his understanding, and his eloquence. We saw each other almost daily. I took him, little formed as he was for good society, to Paget's, where at the first party, (*à propos* of a conversation with A'Court at Naples), he behaved so improperly that we were obliged to give him up.'

About this time Gentz wrote a memoir, addressed to Cobentzl, to prove that the Austrian Cabinet ought not to recognise the Imperial title assumed by Bona-

[1] In the later editions of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* is this couplet:—

'Here's Powell's pistol ready for your life,
And kinder still *two* Pagets for your wife.'

Sir Arthur was one of the two intended. The affair which won him his immortality is mentioned by Gentz.

parte. This led to a correspondence with Louis XVIII., from whom he received several autograph letters. In another tract against Napoleon, he had so far counteracted the views of the ministry as to be regarded as their opponent; and when, towards the end of August, 1805, war became inevitable, he was left in complete ignorance of all that was going on behind the scenes, and had good reason to dread an entire loss of influence and consideration as the result:—

'It was a fatal epoch. Had I only in June conducted myself with more calmness and prudence towards Wintzingerode, who came to Vienna on the part of Russia to make provision for the joint war, and was ready to grant me his full confidence, I had still been able to effect an honourable retreat and do much good. But I fell from one mistake into another.'

His mistakes mattered nothing. Whenever the spirit of revolutionary despotism, embodied in Napoleon, was to be encountered in right earnest, on sound principles, and with broad, unselfish, truly elevated views, his co-operation was universally felt to be indispensable. There was not another pen in Germany, nor perhaps in Europe, that could give equal force to the combined protest of insulted sovereigns and suppressed nationalities, or fling an equal halo round their cause. He was as sure to be called for in the emergency as the popular commander by whom the armies were to be led; and we were not at all surprised to read, directly after the last burst of despondency:

'On the 14th of September a grand reconciliation took place between me and Count Cobentzl. I now resolved to

take up the pen for Austria, and sketched the plan of a work on the balance of power. To carry out this plan, which Cobentzl highly approved, I immediately settled down in my old summer residence at Hietzing, where I satisfactorily completed several sections.'

He was simultaneously employed in putting the finishing touch to his work on the 'War between Spain and England,' which was published in 1806, and contributed largely to turn European opinion in favour of England. His labours were suddenly and unpleasantly interrupted by the near approach of the French army.

'On the 7th of November Count Cobentzl revealed to me, with bitter tears, that it was time to leave Vienna. Count Fries, who had often stood my friend, and Fasbender helped me to put my money matters in order so far as practicable, and on the evening of the 8th, at the same time with Fasbender, and in his carriage, I left Vienna, and on the 10th arrived with Paget and other fugitives at Brünn.'

The news of the battle of Austerlitz reached them at Troppau on the 4th of December, and they hurried off to Breslau; but on the 4th of January we find him at Dresden, contracting with a bookseller for the publication of the two books on which he was principally employed; for that they did not absorb his whole time appears from a subsequent entry, to the effect that he had been working hard at his manuscripts and on memoirs for London.

'On the 8th of February,' he adds, 'at a dinner at Wynne's, the English Minister, we received the news of Pitt's death. Curious that, notwithstanding my grief at this event, I did not regard the composition of the new (Fox-Grenville) minis-

try with unfavourable eyes; I rather promised myself great results from it.'

On the 16th of April he finished the introduction to his 'Fragments upon the Balance of Power in Europe,' and to his entire satisfaction:

'This introduction, as regards power, fulness, and beauty of style, is indisputably the best piece on the larger scale that I have ever written for the public. I read at this time daily, and often many hours of the night, in the Bible, deeply captivated by this reading.'

To his biblical reading may be traced much of the high-wrought energy, the lofty spirit of self-sacrifice, the contempt for present evils, and the richness of imagery, which distinguished this production. It was undertaken to promote a hopeful enterprise: the completed parts of it were published to counteract the demoralising influences of ill success. Like the political tracts of Burke, it abounds in passages of universal and permanent application.

This work was sent to Mackintosh, then at Bombay, with a letter describing the state of events after the Peace of Presburg. The reply begins thus:—

'I received your letter of the 6th of May. I have read it fifty times since with the same sentiment which a Roman, at the extremity of Mauritania, would probably have felt if he had received an account of the ruin of his country, written the morning after the battle of Pharsalia, with all the unconquerable spirit of Cato and the terrible energy of Tacitus. He would have exulted that there was something Cæsar could not subdue, and from which a deliverer and an avenger might yet spring. . . . I received by the same mail

your two precious packets. I assent to all you say, sympathise with all you feel, and admire equally your reason and your eloquence throughout your masterly fragment.'

On the 7th of October, Gentz wrote to von Hammer, the historian:

'The question is no longer about certain provinces, nor the political equilibrium, but the individual safety of every one is at stake. You will know the sentence against Palm. Berthier says he has orders to shoot whoever should read writings such as those of Arndt, Gentz, &c. The internecine war against opinion, the extinction of thought, is in the Order of the day.'

In December, 1806, Palm, a bookseller of Nuremberg, was tried by court-martial for exciting to insurrection by the circulation of libels against Napoleon, condemned and shot. Gentz's last work was one of the alleged libels, and probably the most irritating; but the sentence was general, and he cannot be fairly charged with being even the innocent and unconscious cause of this atrocity.[1]

[1] 'The pamphlet was entitled "L'Allemagne dans son Abaissement," and was attributed to the pen of M. Gentz. Palm was offered his pardon upon condition that he gave up the author of the work, which he refused to do.' (Scott's 'Life of Napoleon,' ch. xxxiv. note.) All Gentz's tracts were avowed and notorious, and 'L'Allemagne,' &c. was not by him. Sir Archibald Alison mentions the 'Fragments upon the Balance of Power' as one of *two* specially inculpated. At a dinner given by an eminent publisher, Thomas Campbell rose and, on the part of the authors present, proposed 'Napoleon Bonaparte.' 'Why are we to drink his health?' asked the astonished host. 'Because he shot a bookseller.'

The book was also sent to Stadion and the Emperor, and called forth letters from each which determined him to return to Vienna. Shortly afterwards he received a letter from Prince Czartoriski with a ring (worth from 1,200 to 1,500 dollars) from the Emperor Alexander; a present which gratified him the less because he had just heard of the peace between France and Russia, the treaty of M. d'Oubril, which the Emperor subsequently refused to ratify. His retirement from the Prussian service had in no respect impaired his reputation or authority with Prussian princes and statesmen; and we find the most distinguished of them repairing to him for counsel and aid as soon as they had reason to anticipate a breach with France. Stein has long conferences with him: Prince Louis carries him off to a grand hunting party given by Prince Lobkowitz at Eisenberg, where the coming crisis is discussed; and on the 30th of September arrives General Phüll with a letter from Count Haugwitz, then at the head of affairs in Prussia, inviting him to the Prussian head-quarters at Naumburg. He arrived there on the 3rd of October, and formed part of the royal and ministerial suite till the 17th; a brief interval pregnant with momentous events, which he has minutely and scrupulously recorded in one of the most remarkable historical documents now extant.[1] It contains a complete exposure of the unparalleled folly, corruption, and incapacity of the Prussian ministers and generals,

[1] 'Journal de ce qui m'est arrivé de plus marquant dans le Voyage que j'ai fait au Quartier-Général de S.M. le Roi de Prusse,' &c. It was not printed in a complete form till 1841.

who managed to fix upon the very worst time for commencing hostilities, and the very worst mode of conducting them.

As usual, Prussia missed her opportunity of throwing a decisive weight into the scale. She hesitated till the Austrians had been beaten at Austerlitz, and compelled to sign peace at Presburg; and then, with England alienated by her acceptance of Hanover and Russia uncertain, she defied Napoleon, who made short work of her at Jena. Gentz's narrative leaves us in doubt whether her policy, if it merits the name, was owing to the King's weakness or the corruption of his advisers. Haugwitz laboured hard to prove that the war was rendered inevitable by the national feeling shared and encouraged by the Queen and Prince Louis, and that the ruinous delay was owing to the almost invincible repugnance of the King. The grand object was to reconcile the late subserviency to France with this sudden display of offended dignity; and for this purpose the first pen in Germany was to be secured. 'The object for which I wished to see you,' says Haugwitz to Gentz, 'is the most important it is possible to imagine; it is the interest and success of our enterprise. You cannot, must not quit us. Besides, I answer for everything. I know that they will be content in Vienna with what you will do here. Never will you have done a more essential service to the general cause. I will take care of your horses, of your lodging, of everything.'

The service for which he was especially wanted was to revise the King's letter to Napoleon and the war

manifesto prepared by Lombard, who, with some difficulty, is persuaded to make important changes in both.

'When the task of revision was completed, Lombard told me that the King was extremely anxious for the publication of this manifesto; that he was unwilling to draw the sword without a declaration of the motives, and that I should do them a great service by hastening the translation as much as possible. I undertook it on my return to my lodgings, and, having devoted the whole night to it, finished it by eight in the morning (Oct. 7th). I saw this morning a number of persons, and especially a great number of officers of the royal suite. I can aver with perfect truth that every man I met in the streets addressed me with nearly the same compliment: "You are here. God be praised! This time, then, we shall not be deceived." On reflecting on all that was fatal in a situation where such guarantees were needed to calm distrust and fear, I began at the same time to suspect that the effect produced by my presence might well have been the principal motive in inviting me. Many things I have observed since have confirmed me in this opinion.'

At all events, they were determined to get as much work as they could out of him: for the next day, after dinner, Haugwitz requested him, in the King's name, to draw up a proclamation to the army, on the subject and character of the war; another addressed to the Prussian public in the same sense: and (what naturally struck him as odd) a prayer to be recited in the churches.

In noticing the letter, Napoleon spoke of it as a wretched pamphlet, such as England engaged hireling authors to compose at the rate of 500*l.* a year, adding, 'I am sorry for my brother, who does not understand

the French language, and has certainly never read that rhapsody.' He also made light of the manifesto; but that a good deal of his indifference on this score was affected, is betrayed by the tone in which he assailed the reputed author in his bulletins. Edged in between bitter sarcasms levelled at the Queen, we find a statement that public indignation is at its height against the authors of the war, especially Her Majesty and 'a wretched scribe named Gentz, one of those men without honour who sell themselves for money.'[1]

He received no remuneration in any shape for his services on that occasion; and to be calumniated in such company was a distinction of which he had good reason to be proud. At the same time it was a serious matter for either man or woman to have this kind of mark set upon them. Gibbon winds up the third chapter of his history with some striking reflections on the wide-spread and far-reaching tyranny of the Cæsars. 'To resist was fatal, and it was impossible to fly. "Wherever you are," wrote Cicero to Marcellus, "remember that you are equally within the power of the conqueror."' A similar train of reflection was suggested by the prostrate condition of the Continent when Napoleon's power was at its culminating point, and the selected objects of his vindictiveness, with the fate of the Duc d'Enghien before their eyes, were shunned or warned off by neutral or friendly territories, as the wounded stag is expelled or avoided by the herd. Madame de Staël had to make a long and perilous

[1] 'Misérable scribe, nommé Gentz, un de ces hommes sans honneur qui se vendent pour de l'argent.'

circuit to reach a precarious resting-place,[1] and Gentz, a sworn servant of the House of Hapsburg, was told to keep aloof from their capital for fear of compromising them:

'As they would not have me in Vienna, since Napoleon had assailed me in the most violent terms in his Berlin bulletins, I travelled on the 12th of November to Prague, and settled down in a wretched quarter there. I was so poor, that a loan of 400 paper florins from one Remboldt, Dietrichstein's secretary, was of the greatest moment to me. What further was to become of me I knew not. Every journal brought the worst news of the progress of the French, the entire separation of England from the Continent,' &c., &c.

This, if a strange, is by no means a dishonourable position for a man who had just been held up to public contempt by an emperor for selling his pen to princes; nor was he more than temporarily depressed by it:

'I was, notwithstanding, almost always in the finest tone of mind; passed the livelong day in the best company; and at this very time awoke in me the last passion which has chained me to a woman. The Duchess of Acerenza, born Princess of Courland, was the object. This passion arose soon after my arrival in Prague, where I spent nearly every

[1] 'Certes, on ne pouvait s'empêcher de le penser, l'Europe, jadis si facilement ouverte à tous les voyageurs, est devenue sous l'influence de l'Empereur Napoléon comme un grand filet qui vous enlace à chaque pas. . . . La géographie de l'Europe, telle que Napoléon l'a faite, s'apprend que trop bien par le malheur. Les détours qu'il fallait prendre pour éviter sa puissance étaient déjà près de deux mille lieues, et maintenant, en partant de Vienne même, j'étais réduite à emprunter le territoire asiatique pour y échapper.'—*Dix Ans d'Exil.*

evening with the Princess, at the pleasantest house in the town. In the month of December it rose to a pitch of wildness, of which my journal has retained the most remarkable traces in letters of fire. I wrote to Adam Müller: "The charms of this woman made me completely forget that there were a sun and stars beyond the heights round Prague." Yet there was a certain independence and power in this with outward circumstances so strangely contrasting madness.'

Exciting times, stirring events, great risks run and great things performed or attempted, warm the blood, kindle the imagination, increase sensibility, encourage enterprise, and breathe hope. Whatever the cause, the secret history of revolutionary times is full of passions, intrigues, and amatory adventures, which apparently absorb the thoughts and interests of the self-same actors and actresses who are simultaneously playing the leading parts in courts and camps before the world:

'Pour mériter son cœur, pour plaire à ses beaux yeux,
J'ai fait la guerre aux rois, je l'aurois faite aux Dieux.'

All revolutionary periods more or less resemble the Fronde in this respect; and there is truth in the concluding remark of Gentz, that the capacity for a concentration of feeling in agitating and distracting circumstances shows power.

'1807.—The beginning of this year was distinguished by my mad passion for Joanna of Courland. It was first, after a short duration, interrupted by an adventurous journey to Nachod, where I off my own hand (*auf eigene Faust*) treated with Count Götzen for the provisional occupation of the

Prusso-Silesian fortresses by Austrian troops. (This occurred from the 10th to the 17th of January.) On my return, I found all changed; Wallmoden in possession; my folly rewarded as it deserved. Still the oscillations of the passions lasted far into March, when (with Mohrenheim's help) they finally ceased. The descriptions are curious, but could not be preserved.'

About this time he received 500 louis from Adair, the English Minister at Vienna, and, 'rather unexpectedly, 500 ducats, with a ring in brilliants worth 400, from Prince Czartoriski,' on the part of Russia. In June another 500 louis from England, and in July we find him with horses, carriages and cook, sunk in endless enjoyments and frivolities with the Princess Bagration, the Duchess of Weimar, the Duke of Coburg, and the whole fine world of Carlsbad, where the news of the Treaty of Tilsit had just arrived. But with him dissipation never implies idleness. He is constantly occupied with what he calls the higher politics, although in the spring he complains that they were slippery ground for him. He did not wish to break with Russia: he could not break with Austria; and both, owing to the 'mis-screwed' condition of the world, were on warlike terms with England. He, however, wrote and addressed to Canning a strong memoir on the Russian war-manifesto, which he had cause to believe was well received; and in May, 1808, the Duke of Portland, his particular friend, being then at the head of the ministry, a considerable credit was opened to him in England, which at once relieved him from all pressing cares. He then goes to Töplitz, intending to spend the summer there:

'There I immediately made the acquaintance of Madame de Staël, who was travelling in North Germany with August Wilhelm Schlegel and Sismondi; and, few other visitors having arrived, I passed several remarkable days with her: accompanied her to Pirna,—for I dared not enter Dresden —and suffered myself to be deeply fascinated by her clever flatteries, which at length assumed a really passionate character and awoke the jealousy of her two companions. She wrote to Vienna, where she had passed the winter, that I was the first man of Germany.'

Madame de Staël was quite as anxious to please as a woman as a wit, and in her advances to celebrated men with a turn for gallantry, she did not leave the impression that her speculations on the passions were limited to the Platonic theory. Gentz's political celebrity and social successes, his glow and flow of mind, his lofty defiance of their common foe, and his professed admiration for her genius, were sure to captivate her; nor was it at all surprising that her learned companions were thrown into the shade. She partially agreed with Byron:

> 'I hate your authors who're all author,—fellows
> In foolscap uniform turned up with ink.'

Schlegel, although the vainest of mortals, was trained to drop into the background when she was amusing herself in this fashion, and, much to his disgust, was universally regarded as the original of the humble friend and complacent admirer in 'Corinne.' In a letter to Rahel, June, 1814, Gentz makes a most ungrateful return for Madame de Staël's flattering attentions, and speaks slightingly of the political part of her book on Germany:

It contains some remarkable and admirably-written chapters on German literature. All the rest is dished-up rubbish. What does so disgusting an egotist, who refers everything to *les peines de cœur*, that is, to the wretched history of her (deservedly) unsuccessful love-trials—what does or can she know about nations, or, for that matter, about individuals, when it is not revealed to her as in these chapters by a sort of inspiration? She set to once, and in right earnest, making love to me: it was in 1808. Out of mere vanity, I then compelled myself to cultivate her. She subsequently became unbearable to me. In 1813, she wrote me some foolish and withal insolent letters from Stockholm, of a political cast. I answered her coldly and slightingly. Thereupon she got wild, and has since talked of me in England as one who deserved worse than hanging. A certain power of execution cannot be denied to this lady: were she other than she is, and knew how to write so, she might become great. But since none, even with the highest so-called talent, can express anything greater than is in them, in her best compositions she produces only emphatic chatter. I regard Châteaubriand as the manikin of her species.'

Had matters been carried a little farther, we might have had another *Elle et Lui* and *Lui et Elle* scandal. If, as is generally supposed, she was the heroine of Benjamin Constant's 'Adolphe,' she was not easily rebuffed or wearied out; and we find her again inviting the attentions of Gentz in 1815:

'It is very kind of you to promise me a day to compensate me for that which deprives me of the Duke of Wellington. Would Friday suit you? and will you be so kind as to inform M. de Humboldt of your decision? We should be too numerous, if I brought together all those of my friends who are ambitious to make your acquaintance; and you will prefer conversing *en petit comité*.'

On the 18th of February, 1809, Gentz received a letter from Count Stadion recalling him to Vienna. He arrived there on the 21st, and the same evening had a long conference with the minister. The war was decided, and he was immediately set to work on the manifesto, which was completed on the 30th of March, and warmly commended. The same day he began the translation of it into French. The Austrians had their usual luck; on the 13th of May their capital was again occupied by the French; and Gentz was once more a fugitive in strangely mixed, highly distinguished, and extremely interesting society, by which he was courted and flattered to the top of his bent.

From his notes of what passed at head-quarters and about the Court, it would appear that the person chiefly to blame for this fresh catastrophe was the Emperor (Francis I. of Austria), who was constantly imposing his confined views and obstinate will on his counsellors, no matter what their standing, reputation, or apparent independence of control. It has been truly and pointedly remarked, that during his long reign—from 1792 to 1835—he was what George III. would have been without a Parliament. Stadion complained to Gentz in the bitterest terms of the manner in which he had been forced to act against his confirmed convictions, and then made responsible for the very policy he had deprecated. Whilst the question of the continuation of the war was still pending, he refused to be compromised any further, and (September 26th) handed over the portfolio of foreign affairs to Metternich, who remarked on accepting it, 'This is the third time we

make peace in the midst of a ministerial interregnum, whilst Bonaparte changes neither system nor instruments, and pursues his course without a jar.' A day or two before, Gentz wrote to a correspondent:

'If you ask me who is minister for foreign affairs, I should be puzzled to tell you, though I pass my life with the two men between whom he must be sought. There are moments when one would be thought to be: moments when the other; moments when neither; moments, again, when both; moments, lastly, when nobody. This is the exact truth. Neither Metternich nor Stadion knows who has actually drawn up the credentials of Lichtenstein!'

The scene of these events was Dotis; and great allowance must be made for the terrible position of the Imperial family, stunned and confounded by disaster and defeat. Till compelled to take part in their distracted counsels, Gentz bore his exile philosophically enough. At Havart, in Hungary, a wretched place, which he thought safer than Buda or Pesth, he says:— 'I lived almost exclusively with Sallust, Tacitus, Seneca, and Lucretius. By accident, the posthumous historical work of Fox fell in my way, which I read and commented with great indignation.' There also he began a translation of Burke's 'Letters on a Regicide Peace.'

At a long subsequent period, when the Emperor Francis, who never much liked Gentz, was induced by a sense of his services to offer him a higher title, he refused, saying, he was content to be called the friend of Metternich. It is, therefore, curious to mark from what slender, and even adverse, beginnings this prized

and cherished friendship sprang. When Metternich's appointment was confirmed, Gentz resolved to leave Dotis, saying:

'I shall never pardon him the indifference and levity with which he sees Count Stadion depart, and the confidence, truly shocking, with which he undertakes so terrible a task as that of the direction of affairs at this moment. I will not even nourish the suspicion that he has contributed in any manner to this scandalous reverse of Stadion: his ostensible conduct is enough.'

He afterwards fully acquits Metternich of this imputation, which was clearly unfounded; nor does any ground appear for Metternich's refusal which would not have been equally applicable to any other attached servant of the monarchy. Gentz's opinion becomes more favourable on hearing Metternich's own defence of his conduct, and he comes round altogether after a long conversation on finance:

'He (M.) is decidedly opposed to the idea of meddling with ecclesiastical property. He has developed to me in this respect very sound and very respectable principles: he is persuaded that all the moral strength of the Austrian monarchy is to be found in its being regarded by the world as the centre and rallying point of all that is left of ancient principles, of ancient forms, of ancient sentiments; and that it is this idea which, so long as it can be maintained, will always give a large number of powerful allies to Austria. This conversation has entirely reconciled me to Metternich, against whom I had great complaints at the epoch of the peace.'

It is certainly a plausible defence of the reactionary policy for which Metternich, justly or unjustly, has

been made responsible. 'It is not possible,' remarks Gentz, soon afterwards, 'that the defects of his character should altogether spoil the just and wise views with which he starts for Paris.' In summing up the constitution and prospects of the Government at the end of 1810, he says:

'Foreign affairs are not absolutely bad in the hands of Count Metternich. He thinks himself fortunate: this is an excellent quality. He has resources; he has *savoir-faire*; he does not spare himself personally. But he is frivolous, dissipated, and presumptuous. If his star seconds him during some years, he can take and give the State a very suitable position. But beware of new crises. They will overthrow him; and (thanks to the radical view) he is as difficult to replace as Count O'Donnell.'

On the 23rd of June, 1810, Gentz records, with allowable complacency, his reception at Töplitz by the Empress, the Emperor's third wife, who, amongst other flattering speeches, said, coupling him with Goethe, of whom she had just before seen a good deal at Carlsbad, 'It is not given to all to write like you, and yet be able to talk so clearly and naturally with every one.'

'In the following August arrives the Princess of Solms, afterwards Duchess of Cumberland, to my taste, the most beautiful woman my eyes ever alighted on, in everybody's opinion one of the most amiable. She was now the sun towards which my gaze was directed. . . . To this day (after sixteen years) my soul swells when I think of this duchess, and the goodwill with which she rewarded my honest homage I still reckon as one of the fairest adornments of my life.'

Currency and maritime laws were the subjects, uncongenial as they may be thought, with which he occupied the hours not devoted to high-born beauty; and he treated both in a manner to command great weight and attention, if not universal approval, for his views. He drew up several papers on finance for the English ministry, who, considering probably that whatever they paid for was their own, quietly took credit for his reasonings and researches. Not so the Austrian financiers, who openly consulted him as the highest authority in this branch of domestic policy, and, so far as the pecuniary embarrassments of the empire permitted, attempted to carry out his principles.

We now pass on to the autumn of 1813, to the eve of one of those emergencies which invariably summoned Gentz from the library or the drawing-room, like Cincinnatus from the plough. War was in the wind; and he was wanted for the manifesto, which, having had early notice from Metternich of the probability of its being needed, he had completed on the 11th of August: war having been declared on the 10th at midnight.

It was read over and settled on the very evening of its completion, and published on the 17th. In token of the general approval, the Emperor Alexander, who arrived at Prague on the 15th, presented him with a diamond ring, the fourth or fifth he had received from the Russian Emperor, who had a peculiar fancy for giving rings. Here he breaks out in a strain which contrasts strikingly with his review of his position at Vienna in 1811, when, partly owing to ill-health and

partly to the marriage of Maria Louisa and Napoleon, he was sunk in the lowest depths of despondency:

'My position in Prague was one of the pleasantest and most interesting imaginable. I was now for several months the medium of all-important political relations between Vienna and head-quarters, the channel of all authentic news, the middle point of all diplomatists and all diplomacy. All went as I could wish: my health had become excellent, my name great. I had more money than enough.'

The women then played an important part in public life, as they always must where the conduct of affairs is withdrawn from popular control and vested in individuals, whether princes, priests, ministers, or generals; and he says he must fairly own that he 'learnt a great deal from the quick-sighted and intriguing Princess Bagration, the enthusiastic but excellent Countess Wrbna, and the restless but clear-seeing Duchess of Sagan.'[1]

On the 22nd of October, the news of the battle of Leipsic, which had reached Prague the day before, was confirmed, and Gentz had the pleasing duty of ordering the illumination of the town, and the celebration of the *Te Deum*, according to the laudable practice of Christian and Catholic conquerors:—

'It was a glorious moment for me. That for which I had fought for twenty years seemed at last to keep the upper hand. Circumstances made me one of the first organs which

[1] This lady pushed the Protestant liberty or licence of divorce to such an extreme as to be able to play at whist with three ex-husbands, whilst a fourth betted on her. In allusion to her practice of pensioning them off, it was said, '*Elle se ruine en maris.*'

announced this great reverse of fortune; and the fall of the sovereignty of the world, and of the man who stood at its head, was for me, if not for every one, a pure triumph, disturbed by no retrospect, since I had not only never wavered in my principles and sentiments, but had drawn upon myself the personal hatred of Napoleon, as not many months before, on a despatch of my composition falling into his hands by treachery or accident, he had openly avowed.'

In the joy of his heart he goes on to expatiate on the merits of the various members of his establishment, especially on those of the French cook, Bastien, who accompanied him everywhere. But we must pass on at once to the Congress of Vienna in 1814, where all the potentates and master-spirits of the victorious side were congregated in one moving and glittering mass, and where everything of importance passed through his hands or under his immediate notice.

The first complete conference was attended by the plenipotentiaries of Austria, Prussia, England, France, Spain, Portugal, Sweden, and Russia. Whilst Gentz was amusing himself at a *soirée* at Madame Nesselrode's, Nesselrode came in and told him they had elected him First Secretary by acclamation. He had already been employed to draw up a declaration for the four great powers, England, Russia, Austria, and Prussia; and he now took an active share in their deliberations, besides discharging the proper duties of his post. It seems, also, to have been an understood thing that he should act as penman to any of them who had any proposition to make or line of policy to urge; the *grands seigneurs* of the period not being, perhaps luckily for

some of them, so ready with the pen as their successors. Thus he was at work on a discourse to be addressed by Count Herbertstein to Count Stadion in introducing him to the Chamber. Stadion, hearing of it, writes him a *joli billet*, requesting to see it, and begs him to compose the reply, which he does. Besides writing a paper on the slave-trade for Castlereagh, he translates his lordship's letter on the affair of Saxony into French, and gives a memorable proof of his independence by openly supporting it against his chief patron:

'*February* 12.—At nine o'clock with Metternich. In translating Castlereagh's letter I felt my ideas cleared and strengthened. At four, at Talleyrand's. Conversation in which he does me the most signal justice. Dined at Metternich's with Wessenberg. After dinner, between seven and eight in the evening, I bring on the most important discussion on Castlereagh's letter, and hold to Metternich (with Wessenberg for witness) the most energetic language he ever heard from me. This day is one of the most marking (*marquans*) in the history of my public life: it will be perhaps *le plus beau* of my life.'

Besides doing him signal justice in words, which cost the speaker nothing, Talleyrand, before the Congress broke up, presented him with 22,000 florins, in the name of Louis XVIII., which is duly entered as a 'magnificent' donation. From Lord Castlereagh he received (through Cooke) 600*l.* in ducats, and *les plus folles promesses.*

Numerous entries give evidence of the female influence to which allusion has been made, and the manner in which the public interests were intermingled with

private by the select few who had charged themselves with the re-settlement of Europe:

'*September* 12.—Went to Prince Metternich: long conversation with him, not (unhappily) on public affairs, but on his and my relations with Madame de Sagan.'

It would seem that this lady inclined to the doctrine of a plurality of admirers, as well as a quick succession of husbands. Two days after the discussion of Castlereagh's letter, we find:

'14.—Returned to Metternich; conversation with him—alas!—on the unhappy *liaison* with *la* Windischgrätz, which appears to interest him still more than the affairs of the world.'

'22.—Dined with Metternich at Nesselrode's. M. informs me of his definitive rupture with the Duchess, which is at present an event of the first order.'

Here follows a specimen of a busy, if not exactly a well-spent, day of rest:—

'*Sunday, Nov.* 6.—Went out at ten. Conversations of different kinds with Metternich. Returned at midday. Count Clam; *long talk with him on his new passion for Dorothée* (*Madame de Périgord*). Visit of the Duc de Campo Chiaro, and sustained conversation with him. At four at the Princess Bagration's; very remarkable conversation with the Emperor of Russia, his projects, his conduct, &c. Dined at Metternich's with Wenzel, Lichtenstein, Binder, Neumann, &c. *Long conversation with him on his affairs of the heart.* At eight at Nesselrode's; M. de Stein, who is cold to me; the famous General Laharpe, who, in a conversation with Pozzo and me, betrays his bad principles without reserve. Returned home at half-past ten, and worked at a despatch for Bukarest.'

'*Friday*, 11*th*.—Visit to the King of Denmark—talked an hour with him. Then Metternich; long conversation, *constantly turning more on the confounded women than on business*.'

'13*th*.—Went out at eleven. At Metternich's. Returned. At half-past one at Talleyrand's. From three to four, curious conversation with the Duchess of Sagan on her fatal history with Metternich. Dined at Count Bernstorff's. Clam with me. At eight, general conference at Metternich's. *Fate of Genoa decided*. Returned at eleven, and worked at the *procès-verbal* till two in the morning.'

High play went on almost nightly, the fashionable game being ombre; but literature was not entirely lost sight of by this gay and agitated throng:

'Dined at Metternich's with Mme. Julie Zichy, Mme. de Wrbna, la Princesse Thérèse, Mme. de Fuchs, Werner, Schlegel, &c. After the dinner Werner read the first acts of his tragedy of *Conigonde*.'

The picture would be incomplete without a practical joke or two, to lighten the labours of the plenipotentiaries. At a dinner at the Duchess's, the conversation, 'very free,' turned on the demoiselles H.; and 'the merriment was much enhanced on learning, after the departure of one of the party, Count Coronini de Carinthia, that he was engaged to one of them. In the course of the evening Gentz received a written challenge, as from the Count, to fight the next day. The forgery, though suspected, was not discovered until the following morning, and Gentz's irritation was increased by a heavy loss the same evening at play.

In the summary of the year he states that his extra-

ordinary receipts in the course of it had amounted to at least 17,000 ducats, besides his regular official income of about 9,000 florins, and the profits of his agency for Wallachia, obtained for him by Metternich in 1813. 'The result is that all branches of my domestic economy are flourishing: I have paid many debts: I have completed and embellished my establishment; and I have been enabled to do a great deal of good for my people. The aspect of public affairs is mournful; but not, as at other times, by the imposing and crushing weight suspended over our heads, but by the mediocrity and folly of almost all the actors; and as I have nothing to reproach myself with, the intimate knowledge of this pitiable course and of all those paltry creatures who govern the world, far from afflicting me, is a source of amusement, and I enjoy the spectacle as if it was given express for my idle moments.'

Swift, who had mixed on the same terms with the governing class, gave up his 'History of England,' exclaiming: 'I have found them all such a pack of rascals, I would have nothing more to say to them.' But Swift was a disappointed man, and Gentz was not.

The rest of the published day-books includes only portions of four months in 1819, July, August, September, and December; very important months for Germany and Gentz's reputation, since the Carlsbad Congress dates from them, and attempts have been made to fasten on him the responsibility of its unpopular resolutions. A spirited defence has been

published by Joseph Gentz,[1] a relative; but it was needless, for no one now doubts that Gentz acted conscientiously, in strict accordance with his avowed and confirmed principles. If there was a man in the world whom he reverenced more than another, whose good opinion he was most anxious to secure, it was Adam Müller, with whom he was in daily, almost hourly, communication whilst he was employed on the famous thirteenth article of the *Bundesakt*. The controversy raised by it could not be made intelligible to English readers without digressing widely into fields where they would be loth to follow; and we can take only a cursory glance at the rest of Gentz's public or political career, although his energy and industry never flagged, and, independently of his unpublished official labours, we could point to printed papers from his pen on every prominent question of European interest from 1819 till 1832. How he continued to be regarded by contemporaries, we learn from such indications as a passage in Châteaubriand's 'Congrès de Vérone,' who states that, on accepting the portfolio of foreign affairs in 1822, besides the usual letters to foreign ministers, he addressed '*un mot particulier*' to M. Gentz, knowing his influence with Metternich, and knowing also that the principal '*contrariété*' would come from the Cabinet of Vienna. This *mot particulier* begins:—

[1] *Friedrich Gentz und die heutige Politik.* Von Josef Gentz. Zweite Auflage. Wien: 1861.

Ueber die Tagebücher von Friedrich Gentz und gegen Varnhagen's Nachwort. (Ein Nachtrag zu der Schrift 'Friedrich Gentz und die heutige Politik.') Von Josef Gentz. Wien: 1861.

'Me voilà ministre, monsieur. M. le Prince de Metternich vous communiquera peut-être la lettre où j'ai l'honneur de lui mander tout le détail. Maintenant ne m'abandonnez pas: je suis sur la brèche.'

Gentz was assailed as reactionary, and he was so in one sense; for from the time when (to borrow the beautiful metaphor of Canning) 'the spires and turrets of ancient establishments began to reappear above the subsiding wave,' he was tremblingly alive to signs in the political horizon which threatened a return of the deluge. The French Revolution of 1830 startled him; but he was amongst the first to deprecate a recurrence to the fatal course pursued by Germany in 1793, and to point out that there was nothing menacing to the peace of the world in the change of dynasty in France.

His multifarious correspondence also bears testimony to his large views, as well as to his vast knowledge, especially his letters to Adam Müller. Persons of distinction, from all quarters of the world, press eagerly for his opinion on the subjects which interest them. Thus, the penultimate Earl Stanhope, a very clever and accomplished nobleman, keeps him fully informed, at intervals from 1825 to 1828, of the changes in the English ministry, as well as the leading measures before Parliament, and earnestly presses for his advice.[1] Goethe begs him to employ his influence with his powerful friends to forward a literary object, and grace-

[1] Earl Stanhope's letters are written in German, and begin 'My dear and honoured friend.' The completest collection of Gentz's fugitive writings we are acquainted with, was made by his Lordship, and is now in the library at Chevening.

fully recals the period when they 'conversed in the most cultivated society on the affairs of the heart and mind.' Alexander and William Humboldt write frequently. But space compels us to confine ourselves to the correspondence with Rahel,[1] in which Gentz pours out his whole soul with the frankness and felicity of expression which are traditionally stated to have made him so fascinating a talker.

Her husband's handwriting was the clearest and neatest ever seen, not excepting Porson's or Mrs. Piozzi's. Hers was all but illegible; and we note the fact for the benefit of those who attach importance to penmanship as an indication of character. 'Since I often read your letter of March,' writes Gentz, 'I have copied it, to get over the torment of your bad handwriting, and preserve the enjoyment unimpaired: I now copy all your letters.' Yet they were not love-letters; at least not what Germans call love-letters; for they might pass for such in most other countries, and may be compared in this respect to a celebrated poem by a gifted lady (Mrs. Norton), beginning, 'I cannot love thee,' and containing some tolerably significant assurances that she could. On the 21st of September, 1810, he writes:

'It has really been an endless mistake,—shall I say of ours or Nature's?—that we never arrived at love for each other,—I mean to ordinary complete love. A relation would have burst forth between us, the like of which the world has had but few. Instead of this, we have both of us wasted

[1] The wife of Varnhagen von Ense, one of the most celebrated and influential women of her generation.

our best on *people* (Leute), as you distinguish this class; and are, each in a way, impoverished. You stood higher, saw more freely and farther, than I.'

Byron would not have thought it a mistake:

> 'No friend like to a woman man discovers,
> So that they have not been nor may be lovers.'

Then, with a rare frankness and self-knowledge, Gentz goes on to attribute his constant slowness or incapacity to seize the goods the Gods provided him to 'the meanest of all human knaveries, namely, vanity, the stupid striving for appearances, which cheats us out of all true enjoyment, out of the entire genuine reality of life.'[1] We shall presently find Rahel valuing Gentz for his childlike betrayal of his weakness, as when he writes: 'Now, I beg of you, love, to write soon again, and soon again to flatter me in your heavenly way. Your flatteries are a true voluptuous soul-bath, out of which one comes refreshed and strengthened.' Most people would expect him to come out enervated; yet there *are* women who by applauding what is public-spirited, by sympathising with what is noble and elevating, really brace the nerves of the author, the artist, the orator, the statesman, the patriot, or the philanthropist, for his allotted task. Steele said of Lady Elizabeth Hastings that to love her was a liberal education. At all events the taste for flattery from female lips is not a very uncommon nor a very cul-

[1] 'Accursed be the lofty opinion in which the mind wraps itself! accursed the blinding of appearances by which our senses are oppressed!'—*Faust.*

pable one, '*Vous flattez, coquine, mais n'importe, flattez toujours: c'est bien agréable.*' Gentz, too, was all made up of sensibility and nervousness—a complete conductor of electricity, as he says somewhere—an Eolian harp, which trembled at every passing breeze; and much of the fancy and feeling that light and warm his style may be traced to his susceptibility to temporary impressions:

> 'They were but the wind passing carelessly over,
> And all the wild sweetness they waked was his own.'

He writes to Rahel in 1815:—'That is the true *Eau de Portugal*, classic in form and substance. Scents are an important circumstance in life.' 'I am well; God be thanked. (What happiness!!) I am living alternatively in Baden and Vienna. I breakfast alternately on *brioches*, with excellent butter, or other godlike eatables. I have got furniture at which the heart leaps, and am less afraid of death.' He has been known to remonstrate very seriously with Metternich on the negligence of his cook, and the tendency of a bad dinner to impair the mental powers, and impede instead of 'lubricating' business. '*Des fleurs et des livres, voilà tout ce qu'il faut à ma vie,*' exclaims Madame de Roland, who, if she was not belied, required a few accessories. But Gentz, in failing health, found his chief solace in books and flowers. The date of one of his letters runs thus:

'*Weinhaus, a quarter of an hour from Vienna, the 28th of September*, 1825.—In a room before a large plate-glass window, through which I overlook my little garden, or

rather my great bouquet of flowers, as set in a frame, in a clear dark-blue sky, and with sixteen degrees of heat. As if you saw it; is it not?'

We find Lamartine complaining that he has lived too fast:

'J'ai trop vu, trop senti, trop aimé de ma vie.'

So Gentz complains that through his brain, over his life, have passed too many events, thoughts, combinations, works, men, destinies, for the memory to grapple with, or for him to dwell with pleasure on the past. 'I am, and I was at all times, condemned to the Present; and although all passions, nay to a certain degree, all unrest of desire and enjoyment have subsided in me, yet the charm of the Present is still too strong.' He was an illustration of Lord Lytton's new organ or faculty of 'Weight'; and his philosophy of enjoyment might be summed up in the graceful words of Horace Twiss's unpublished song:

'The night has spread its parting wings
To join the days before it;
And as for what the morning brings,
The morning mists hang o'er it.'

Soon after Kotzebue had been stabbed by Sand, Gentz received a threatening letter, stating that, as he was not worthy of dying by the dagger, poison had been destined and prepared for him: that he had long been condemned as a traitor who had undermined the freedom of his country. This letter had a terrible effect on him. He excused himself from dining with a foreign ambassador, his assured friend, and for a week

together did not venture to leave the house, and hardly to eat. Varnhagen, who speaks of the letter as a mystification, cites the alarm felt by the victim as a proof of his nervousness at the approach of danger or the thought of pain; but men of his temperament are not necessarily wanting in firmness or courage, and no womanly fear was betrayed by Gentz when he passed through the outposts of hostile armies to beard Napoleon in his pride.

He was above the middle height, and his features indicated decision and self-confidence. He was frank to the verge of imprudence, and could not dissemble or dissimulate, if he would. Whenever he tried to adopt the diplomatic manner, he failed so egregiously that a 'foreign minister' (Paget, we believe) said he could always tell at a glance when Gentz wanted to delude or work upon him; for there was invariably the same stolen sidelook of inquiry and doubt. He commonly gave up all attempt at reserve or concealment with a laugh.

Few in declining years would be ready, with Fénelon, to live their lives over again precisely as they had lived them. Many, after playing 'no unnoticed part,' would exclaim with James Smith:

> 'Would I resume it? Oh! no—
> Four acts are done—the jest grows stale,
> The waning lamps burn dim and pale,
> And reason asks *cui bono?*'

But a large number, perhaps the majority, would leap at the proposal to have back their youth, with its

wild freshness and its buoyancy, if they might retain the dear-bought lessons of experience:

'Oh, who would not welcome that moment returning
When passion first waked a new life through his frame,
And his soul, like the wood that grows precious in burning,
Gave out all its sweets to love's exquisite flame?'

This boon, this blessing (if it be one), was virtually vouchsafed to Gentz, who, in his sixty-fifth year, was suddenly restored, as if by immersion in Medea's caldron instead of the baths of Gastein, to exuberant health and vigour—moral, mental, and physical—of mind, of body, and of heart. The miracle—for it sounds like one—with its memorable effects, had best be read in his own glowing language.[1] In a letter to Rahel, 22nd September, 1830, after apologising for a 'long, very long' silence, he continues:—

'The first commencement of this happy revolution arose out of the circumstance that my health, which for fifteen years had suffered grievously—not so much by special attacks of illness, as by incessant discomfort with the gout—has, during the last two years, experienced a regeneration little short of miraculous. I feel myself at present thoroughly well, and have a keen sense of well-being, such as I scarcely experienced even during the best years of my life. One consequence of this, amongst others, was, that not only has my mind regained its entire youthful freshness, and my heart its full susceptibility, but also that my person has become strikingly *rajeuni*, and all my bodily faculties are again at my disposal. At my time of life, it is almost ludicrous to

[1] The following extracts from his letters to Rahel, are taken from a translation (never published) of the series by Mr. Grote, the historian of Greece.

speak in such terms of myself; but, as I can make the communication with perfect truth, since it is made to me every day and from every side by others, why should I withhold from you, my sympathising friend, the satisfaction of hearing it from myself? I could produce to you, in support of it, testimonies from persons who have not seen me for some time, which would leave no doubt at all on your mind. My apprehension of death, which is well known to you, is on this account, though not altogether effaced, yet still so much cast into the shade that it seldom assails me; and I already begin tacitly to reckon upon attaining at least the extraordinary age of Bonstetten.

'You will now be somewhat prepared to understand what follows.

'Along with my returning health, I have thrown myself once more into the world and into social life, which I had for many years renounced. The satisfaction with which I was everywhere received, proved to me that I could still very well maintain my place in this circle. My increasing repugnance to public business,—though I have never for an instant ceased to attend to it conscientiously,—my growing fear of solitary study, which always presented to me nothing but melancholy conclusions,—have contributed, each in its way, to this change in my manner of living. I attached myself chiefly to the society of women, who have always been agreeable to me, *and who are at the present day far above men*—much more than they were twenty-five or thirty years ago. I made my court (as people call it) to some of them, and procured for myself in this way particular interest among the general range of society. That I could ever again be in love, I regarded as a thing impossible, though I nevertheless felt that, to enjoy in perfection my renewed and regenerated existence, I ought to arrive once more even at this extreme limit. My presentiment has been realised in a most unexpected way. To you I must and I dare confess,

what towards others I content myself with not formally denying, that since last winter I have borne in my bosom a passion of greater strength than any which I ever felt during my earlier life—that this passion was indeed accidental in its origin, but that I have since intentionally fostered and cherished it.

'You will be astonished—perhaps horror-stricken—when I tell you that the object of this passion is a girl of nineteen years of age, and, what is more, a *danseuse*. I require all my confidence, not merely in your good nature, but in your liberality (in the old and lofty sense of that word)—in your exalted views, so much above all that is commonplace—in your enlarged range of thought—in your tolerance—I require all this to obviate the apprehension that you will at once condemn me upon my own confession, without grace or mercy.

'Yet when I assure you that the intercourse with this girl has poured out upon me a fulness of felicity such as I have never known or felt before,—that this intercourse has been to me not only the counterpoise of numerous anxieties under which otherwise I should have infallibly succumbed, but also the upholding principle of my cheerfulness of spirits, my health, and my life—I think you will be inclined not only to excuse me, but also to admit, with your usual enlightened candour, that the person who could thus work upon me, besides the unbounded beauty by which she enchains me, must also possess other qualities which account for a relation such as I have depicted.

'This person is now in Berlin. If on other accounts you happen still to concern yourself about the Theatre, you will probably hear of her; but *I* feel anxious that you should *see* her once or twice, if it be only upon the stage. I know from other evidences that you set a high value upon the external appearance of people, and you are right in doing so. I am therefore anything rather than indifferent to the

impression which this Fanny may make upon you; and I entreat you to take an opportunity of writing to me upon the subject.

'Together with the sensibility to social amusements, to feminine beauty, to love,—I still tremble when I speak the word aloud, even before *you*,—there has been newly revived in me the sensibility to poetry. I avail myself of every leisure hour to read poetry—ancient and modern—Latin, German, Italian, French. How far I have gone in this favourite occupation, you shall judge by one example, the particular circumstances of which cannot be without interest for you.'

After mentioning how Heine's poems had fallen in his way, and fascinated him, he proceeds:

'At this moment I marvel at the courage which it has required to lay before you such a train of thoroughly unexpected confessions,—to tell you that I feel myself *rajeuni*,—that I am in love,—that I adore a *danseuse*,—and that I sympathise with Heine! You are, however, the only person in the world with whom I could hazard such avowals, nor could I even have hazarded them with you, unless this letter were going by an Austrian courier to Berlin. Almost every matter which it contains could only be written in the strictest confidence; but I was for a long time accustomed to think with you, to feel with you, and never to veil from you even my most hidden weaknesses. If you, on your side, have remained the *same*,—and how can I possibly doubt it?—reward my confidence with a letter in the old well-known style, friendly or reproachful, as you please. Acquaint me at the same time how matters go on with you, with your health and temper, with your temporal and eternal well-being. We two ought never to separate as long as we breathe. Pray chime in with this sentiment, and appease speedily the longing of your faithful friend, GENTZ.'

Opera-goers of mature years will not need to be told who this wonder-working Fanny was, but a few details relating to her may be welcome to a younger generation. The Opera at Vienna was small, and hardly worthy of the Austrian capital; but it enjoyed a high authority in the musical world, and the ballet was conducted upon a scale that enabled it to rival those of Paris and Naples. In 1828–29, the leading *danseuses* were Fanny and Thérèse Elssler, sisters, and natives of Vienna. Their father had been a familiar attendant for many years on the great composer, Joseph Haydn, who left him a considerable legacy, which, from no fault of his, was soon reduced to little or nothing. Of their mother we know nothing, except that, bred up in theatrical company of the lower sort, she had no scruple in agreeing with her husband to turn their daughters' personal attractions and accomplishments to the best account.

Barbaja, the director of the Opera at Naples, engaged them for the San Carlos Theatre when mere children, and being also director of the Court Theatre of Vienna, brought them out at it as soon as he thought them sufficiently advanced to be produced with effect. They created a sensation; their reputation soon became European; and Fanny's style of dancing, independently of her exceeding loveliness, was exactly adapted to attract admirers of cultivated taste. 'Poetry put in action' was not too complimentary a phrase. The Duke de Reichstadt fell desperately in love with her, and might be seen day after day walking up and down near her lodgings, in the

hope of a chance such as befell Faust with Margaret; but he was disappointed, and, although rumour has connected her with his premature death, they never met in private at all.

Gentz was simultaneously struck, and eagerly sought an introduction, which was by no means so easy as may be thought. There was, indeed, no 'mother of the maids' to watch over the morals of the 'corps de ballet,' but the theatres were under the guardianship of a public officer, the Count de Gallenberg, who was in the habit of inviting to his house the performers, male and female, who stood highest in public esteem; and it was perfectly understood that any acquaintance beyond their own circle must originate with him. For some time the Count refused to introduce Gentz, either to tantalise him, or to save him from the apprehended folly; but the envied privilege was at last granted, and so assiduously followed up that he at length obtained exclusive possession of the prize. He was reputed rich on the strength of his prodigal expenditure: he was celebrated: he was the familiar companion of the great; and there were other reasons why the mother gave him the preference over younger rivals; for he certainly owed his success, in the first instance, to the shameless venality of the mother, and the poor girl resigned herself to her destiny with a sigh. How he gradually won upon her may be collected from his letters; and the enduring attachment she eventually contracted for him, when the tie was once formed, does credit to her understanding and her heart.

Two years before, in reference to Rahel's recom-

mendation of some verses in the *Courrier Français*, he said that he had left off reading verses for many years, always excepting Virgil, Horace, and Lucan: that the only French poet he could still endure was Racine; and that looking for verses in a French newspaper would be to him like taking a stroll into a pesthouse. His sudden taste for Heine's 'Buch der Lieder,' therefore, is not the least striking feature of the transformation.

The subject of his love is resumed, after the lapse of a month, with the same vividness and intensity which render us loth to abridge the letters relating to it. They form, in fact, the very keystone of his character, and contain many striking passages unconnected with his passion. But we can only find room for two or three more:

'Presburg, October 18, 1830.

'The best instructed among the ordinary people around me think and affirm (for my connection with her is the subject of endless talk in the society here, where I am in great favour) that I have conquered her only by what is called my *eloquence*. This of itself would be singular enough; but still it is very far from being the truth. I have gained her singly and exclusively by the magical power of *my love*. When she first knew me, she neither knew nor even conceived that there existed anywhere *such a love*, and a hundred times over she has confessed to me that I had unfolded to her a new world by the manner in which I behaved to her from the very first moment, and still further by the revelation of a love the possibility of which she had never dreamt of, and which is, I must own, neither frequent nor common. Here alone lies the whole key of the phenomenon. You will understand, as a matter of course, that I never was

silly enough to expect from her a return of passion, in the narrower sense of the word. I never imagined that she could "fall in love" with me, for even in the full fervour of passion my reason does not abandon me. It was enough for me to inspire her with a sentiment floating between friendship, gratitude, and love: and I did in fact succeed—for men succeed in everything which they struggle for with complete energy and genuine perseverance—in so planting and confirming this feeling in her mind, that it by degrees filled her whole soul, and at this moment, unless all the evidences deceive me, it cannot be supplanted or overcome by any other feeling whatever.

'Now imagine what it is, at my time of life and with my few remaining pretensions, to see a passion like mine thus rewarded! Imagine *la satisfaction de l'amour-propre*, from which no human being can disengage himself, and least of all one who takes as much pleasure in flattery as you and I do; imagine the blessedness of daily, undisturbed intercourse with a person in whom everything ravishes me,—who does not require, in order to produce this effect, "to rise like a complete Venus out of the sea," as you express it in a divine phrase of your letter, which I thoroughly comprehend—in whose eyes, in whose hands (do you ever look at them!), in whose single and separate charms, my mind can absorb itself for hours together—whose voice tells upon me like magic—and with whom I carry on endless conversations which would often astound you, as I should do with the most docile school-girl: for I educate her with paternal care, and she is at once my beloved mistress and my faithful child. Imagine this rich stock of enjoyments, and in addition to it all, so much more which no tongue can tell, and it will be easy for you with a heart as comprehensive as yours to understand completely that which to others may still appear foolishness. . . .

'I set a proper value upon your diplomatic talent, but I

must at the same time acquaint you, that in this case it was hardly required. The nature of my connection with Fanny is so little a secret at Vienna that it is talked of every day; and what contributes not a little to my comfort is, that those persons for whose opinion I care the most—amongst others Prince Metternich—never treat the matter with any other feeling than that of kindness and delicacy. There will be no *war* therefore on this account.'

Mixed up with passionate professions and glowing pictures of happiness, we find a curious piece of self-criticism, or rather self-laudation:

'Really I am not blinded by vanity upon this occasion. I have entirely forgotten that I ever was an author; and for the last twenty years I have not looked at a line of my printed works, the "Protocols of Congress" excepted. A little while ago, a man, who reads very well, read to me aloud the preface of a certain book, on the "Political Balance;" and I was altogether astonished that I could ever have written so well. Pray read this preface once over, only for a joke, and then tell me yourself whether that was not something like a style. Schlegel has written but few pages which in point of style will bear comparison with it.

'It is full time for me to conclude. This is the longest letter which has come from my pen for years past. It will give you pleasure, I know well. Reward me with a speedy answer, for I really languish for one. To be understood and loved is the highest enjoyment in the world, next to that which the genuine passion of love affords. In our present correspondence both are confounded in one. Forwards! therefore. God be with you. GENTZ.'

This again recals the Dean of St. Patrick's, who, as Scott relates, 'evinced an unaffected indifference for

the fate of his writings, providing the end of their publication was answered,' but was once overheard muttering, after glancing over the 'Tale of a Tub,' 'Good God! what a genius I had when I wrote that book!'

No intoxication, bodily or mental, from wine, from opium, or from love, can last long without periods of depression, and these will be most trying where the enjoyment has been greatest:—

'Dearly bought the hidden treasure
Finer feelings can bestow;
Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure
Thrill the deepest notes of woe.'

On January 21, 1831, he writes:

'My intercourse with Fanny and her incomparable behaviour towards me, are now, in truth, the only bright spots in my life. Yet even this tender and blissful connection is insufficient to cheer me permanently. There are hours when even in her society I go through the mournful experience so beautifully described by one of the greatest poets—to me always one of the most dangerous poets of antiquity. I must quote the passage in Latin: Varnhagen will translate it to you. Of course you know the name of Lucretius:

"Medio de fonte leporum
Surgit amari aliquid, quod in ipsis floribus angit."

("There springs out of the mid-fountain of delight something, which tortures even amongst the flowers themselves.")

'When things are come to this pass, there is indeed good reason for complaint. Yet I initiate Fanny as little as I can into the secrets of my distress. The more completely she continues pure and free from embarrassment, the more certain am I to find in her that diversion of mind and re-

freshment without which I should very shortly sink altogether. But to you and to your clear head and strong soul, I speak out freely. Whether you blame or soothe me, I must be a gainer by this.'

Thinking it worse than useless to keep on repeating that obviously wrong things are wrong, we have refrained from applying the befitting comment to the many reprehensible episodes of this remarkable man's career; amongst which the absorbing passion of a sexagenarian for a girl of nineteen, a dancer, must undoubtedly be ranked. Besides, the business of narrators is with events, and if they turn aside to point the moral, they may weaken it by exciting a rebellious and defying spirit in those whom they assume to lead. In this particular case, the blame and ridicule of the incongruity were met half way by his avowal; and some palliation is to be found in the state of Viennese manners, the toleration of friends, and the fine qualities of the object, whose youthful errors were mainly owing to her parents, whilst the sterling virtues and respectability of her maturer years are her own.

It has been confidently asserted that the death of Goethe, March 22, 1832, made a deep impression on him—'proximus ardet Ucalegon'—but an 'Indian summer' is fearfully exhaustive of the sap of life: despondency is not unfrequently the sign or forerunner of decay; and if depressing occurrences shortened his life, they were those which occurred in 1830 and 1831. He died on June 9, 1832. 'Nous l'avons vu mourir doucement, et au son d'une voix qui lui

faisait oublier celle du temps.'[1] Like Johnson, he dreaded death: like Johnson, he met it calmly, and found unexpected consolation in faith:

'It is dreadful to meet old age and death. No one understood so well how to fortify me against them as you. I mean, to fortify me humanly; for I am farther advanced in religion than you. I fancy you have remained very heathenish; which, amongst other things, clearly comes of your blind love for that heathen of heathens, Goethe: I, on the contrary, during the last ten years, have become thoroughly Christian, and hold Christianity to be the genuine centre of the world. For all that is still youthful in me, I have to thank this beneficial revolution.'

This was written to Rahel in 1811, and he never fell back into unbelief or indifference. One evening, during the later years of his life, after dining at the Weinberg with Baron de Prokesch and two other friends, he accompanied them to Vienna in a carriage; and so fascinating was his conversation that on arriving at the place where they were to separate, they stopped the carriage between three and four hours to listen to him. The subject was the immortality of the soul, which he eloquently upheld against all the sceptical arguments that could be suggested or recalled. There is a somewhat similar story of Windham passing half the night in the streets in conversation with Burke.

He died in debt; and the sole tribute to his memory, in the way of monument, is a simple tablet placed over his grave by Fanny Elssler. A fitting motto for it might have been taken from Goethe's 'Helena'—

[1] Châteaubriand, *Congrès de Vérone*.

'*Viel geschmäht und viel bewundert*' (much abused and much admired). He had fairly earned both the abuse and the admiration; and a dispute whether the good or the bad preponderated, would be the familiar contest about the colour of the bi-coloured shield.

That so little was done for him by his most influential friend sounds very like a confirmation of Swift's remark, that great men seldom do anything for those with whom they live in intimacy;[1] but his refusal of the Emperor's offer of a promotion which was to have included pecuniary advantages, suggests a valid excuse for Metternich, although the refusal itself is unaccountable. If Gentz expected to disarm envy by a show of humility or disinterestedness, his ordinary discernment of the springs of human action was at fault: people far more readily forgive honours and titles than social superiority and influence without rank or wealth; and his position in the great and gay world, with nothing but his personal qualities to show for it, was precisely that which most stimulated the malice by wounding the self-love of his calumniators. The mercenary nature of his relations with other countries was of course their most formidable weapon; which was blunted or parried by the positive and (we believe) well-founded assertion that Metternich was privy to all his transactions with foreign ministers, and that foreign

[1] 'They call me nothing but Jonathan, and I said I believed they would leave me Jonathan as they found me, and that I never knew a ministry do anything for those whom they made companions of their pleasures, and I believe you will find it so; but I care not.' (*Journal to Stella*, February 7, 1711.)

ministers were privy to his unreserved communications with Metternich.

Extreme delicacy in money matters is of modern growth amongst public men in England, and fifty years since had not taken root in the despotic Courts of Europe. All servants of the British crown are now peremptorily forbidden to accept gratifications in any shape from foreign potentates. The privilege of wearing foreign orders is obtained with difficulty, and, considering how frequently they are the reward of charlatanry, might be advantageously restricted within still closer limits. Naturally, therefore, we hear with surprise of the Austrian Government permitting a public servant of Gentz's eminence to draw on foreign powers for his chief means of subsistence; and the notoriety of his so doing flings the main responsibility upon them. There was no secrecy, or pretence of secrecy, in the matter: our only precise knowledge of his subsidies is derived from his corrected diaries; and one undeniable fact in his favour is that the whole of his surviving friends dwell most emphatically on his loyalty, integrity, and truthfulness.

From the female point of view, faults and weaknesses became merits and fascinations. In a letter after his death to Ranke, Rahel, after deploring the impossibility of conveying her precise impressions by words, proceeds:

'Therefore you cannot know that I then, and for that very reason, loved my lost friend when he said or did something downright childish. I loved him for saying he was so happy to be the first man in Prague,—that all the highest

functionaries, great lords, and great ladies, were obliged to send or come to him, &c.—with a laugh of transport, and looking full into my eyes. Wise enough to be silent about this, is every trained distorted animal; but who has the self-betraying soul, the childlike simplicity of heart, to speak it out?

. . . . . .

There are many whom we are obliged to praise piece by piece, and they do not find their way into the heart by love: there are others, a few, who may be much blamed, but they ever open the heart, and stir it to love. This is what Gentz did for me: and for me he will never die.'

Although this theory of amiability is confirmed by Rochefoucauld, who maintains that we love people rather for their faults than their virtues, such evidence to character would weigh more with a German than with an English tribunal. Yet it is by German modes of thought and conduct that German men and women must principally be judged. The moral atmosphere in which they lived, with their temptations and opportunities, must be kept constantly in view when they are arraigned at the bar of European public opinion; and a purely English standard of right and wrong would obviously lead to unjust or uncharitable conclusions when applied to a Rahel or a Gentz.

MARIA EDGEWORTH: HER LIFE AND WRITINGS.

[FROM THE EDINBURGH REVIEW FOR OCT. 1867.]

A Memoir of Maria Edgeworth, with a Selection from her Letters. By the late MRS. EDGEWORTH, edited by her Children. Not published. In 3 vols. 1867.

WE are afraid of appealing so confidently to the present generation, but are there any survivors of the last who do not habitually associate the name of Maria Edgeworth with a variety of agreeable recollections?—with scenes, images, and characters which were the delight of their youth?—with the choicest specimens of that school of fiction in which amusement is blended with utility, and the understanding is addressed simultaneously with the fancy and the heart? All these, and they must still be many, will be rejoiced to hear that a Memoir has recently appeared which may enable them to watch the everyday life of their old favourite, to peep into the innermost folds of her mind, to track her genius to its source, to mark the growth of her powers, and fix how much was the gift of nature and how much the product of cultivation or of art. For ourselves, we were led by it at once to a reperusal of

her works; and so satisfactory was the result, that we earnestly recommend a fresh or first trial of them to novel-readers of all ages.

There is another reason for reverting to Miss Edgeworth's writings with unabated interest, independently of their attractiveness. They contributed, more than any others that can be named, towards the inauguration of that splendid era of romance which began and reached its full effulgence with the author of 'Waverley.' In the General Preface to the collected edition of the Waverley Novels, after alluding to the two circumstances which led him to this style of composition, Scott says: 'The first was the extended and well-merited fame of Miss Edgeworth, whose Irish characters have gone so far to make the English familiar with the character of their gay and kind-hearted neighbours of Ireland, that she may be truly said to have done more towards completing the Union than perhaps all the legislative enactments by which it has been followed up. Without being so presumptuous as to hope to emulate the rich humour, pathetic tenderness, and admirable tact which pervade the works of my accomplished friend, I felt that something might be attempted for my own country of the same kind with that which she has so fortunately achieved for Ireland.'

Luckily for her father, and not unluckily for Miss Edgeworth, their lives and labours are so blended and intertwined that her name and memory cannot be separated from his. They were connected by ties stronger than ties of blood: by community of objects, habits, affections, and modes of thought. He had

plausible claims to the title of her literary parent. He divined the natural bent of her genius, and aided, without forcing, its development. He gave her the most bracing kind of education, moral and intellectual: the groundwork being scrupulous accuracy of statement, patient observation, frankness, self-knowledge, and self-respect. He made her from early girlhood his companion and friend. He read with her, wrote with her, came before an applauding public hand-in-hand with her, and (we really believe unconsciously) traded on her. The best description of him in advanced years is given by Lord Byron:

'I have been reading the Life by himself and daughter of Mr. R. L. Edgeworth, the father of *the* Miss Edgeworth. It is altogether a great name. In 1813 I recollect to have met them in the fashionable world of London, in the assemblies of the hour, and at a breakfast of Sir Humphry and Lady Davy's, to which I was invited for the nonce. I had been the lion of 1812: Miss Edgeworth and Madame de Staël, with the Cossack, towards the end of 1813, were the exhibitions of the succeeding year. I thought Edgeworth a fine old fellow, of a clarety, elderly, red complexion, but active, brisk and endless. He was seventy, but did not look fifty—no, not forty-eight even. I had seen poor Fitzpatrick not very long before—a man of pleasure, wit, eloquence, all things. He tottered—but still talked like a gentleman, though feebly. Edgeworth bounced about, and talked loud and long, but he seemed neither weakly nor decrepit, and hardly old.

'He was not much admired in London, and I remember a "ryghte merrie" and conceited jest which was rife among the gallants of the day—viz. a paper had been presented for the *recal of Mrs. Siddons to the stage*, to which all men had

been called to subscribe. Whereupon Thomas Moore, of profane and poetical memory, did propose that a similar paper should be subscribed and circumscribed for the *recal of Mr. Edgeworth to Ireland.* The fact was everybody cared more about *her.* She was a nice little unassuming "Jeannie-Deans-looking body," as we Scotch say; and if not handsome, certainly not ill-looking. Her conversation was as quiet as herself. One would never have guessed she could write her name; whereas her father talked, not as if he could write nothing else, but as if nothing else was worth writing.'

Moore denies all participation in the 'ryghte merrie jest.' But Lord Byron himself is said to have proposed a Society for the Suppression of Edgeworth. The efforts of such an institution would have proved as unavailing as those of the Society for the Suppression of Vice. Edgeworth was insuppressible; and, take him for all in all, he was not a man whom it was proper or expedient to suppress. With the simple change of gender, we might apply to him what Talleyrand said of Madame de Staël: '*Elle est vraiment insupportable;*' which he qualified after a short pause by, '*c'est son seul défaut.*' Edgeworth was a useful man, an excellent man in many ways; although, like many useful and excellent men, a bore of the first magnitude. He was a patriot, a philanthropist, a good landlord, a good magistrate, a good husband, and (what is most to our present purpose) a good father.

The Edgeworths, of Edgeworth-Town, County Longford, were a family of considerable local distinction, who came into Ireland in the reign of Elizabeth. Their settlement there is clearly traced to Edward Edgeworth,

bishop of Down and Connor, in 1593, who, dying without issue, left his fortune to his brother, Francis, in 1619. In the way of historical illustration, they boast of a Lady Edgeworth, a woman of extraordinary beauty and courage, who, in consequence of the gallant attentions of Charles II. at her presentation, refused to attend his court a second time, and afterwards gave an instance of presence of mind which equals or surpasses the Victoria-cross exploit of flinging a lighted shell out of a trench. On some sudden alarm at her husband's Irish castle of Lissard, she hurried to a garret for gunpowder, followed by a maid-servant carrying a candle without a candlestick. When the lady had taken what she wanted from the barrel, had locked the door, and was halfway down the stairs again, she observed that the girl had left the candle, and asked her what she had done with it. She had left it 'stuck in the barrel of black salt.' Lady Edgeworth returned by herself to the garret, put her hand carefully underneath the candle and carried it safely out.

Richard Lovell Edgeworth, the lineal descendant of Francis, and the representative of the family when we take it up, was born at Bath in 1744. His maternal grandfather was a Welsh judge named Lovell, of whom it is related that, travelling over the sands at Beaumaris as he was going circuit, he was overtaken by the tide: the coach stuck fast in a quicksand; the water rose rapidly, and the registrar, who had crept out of the window and taken refuge on the coach-box, whilst the servants clustered on the roof, earnestly entreated the judge to do the same. With the water nearly touching

his lips he gravely replied: 'I will follow your counsel if you can quote any precedent for a judge's mounting a coach-box.'

It must be admitted that a man so descended had an hereditary right to firmness of nerve and eccentricity, and Edgeworth did not allow the right to fall into abeyance from disuse. He is reported to have said:—'I am not a man of prejudice: I have had four wives; the second and third were sisters; and I was in love with the second in the lifetime of the first.' The first was Anna Maria, daughter of Paul Elers, Esq., of Black Bourton, in Oxfordshire, by whom he had Maria and a son. The second and third were Honora and Elizabeth Sneyd. The fourth, Miss Beaufort, daughter of the Rev. Dr. Beaufort and sister of the late Admiral Sir Francis Beaufort, is the author of the memoir, edited by her children. The book is remarkably well written and edited; and, with a few slight omissions and alterations, might be laid before the public in the full confidence that the reputation of everyone concerned, whether dead or living, would be confirmed or raised by it. The selections from the letters are peculiarly valuable, as well from the spirited descriptions, curious anecdotes, and sound remarks on things and people, as from the light they throw on Miss Edgeworth's life, character, and writings. We therefore purpose to quote liberally from them.

Maria (born January 1, 1767) had only just attained her sixth year when her mother died, and she just remembered being taken to the death-bed for a last farewell. Prior to this event her childhood had been passed

at Black Bourton, where she ran some risk of being spoilt by the fond indulgence of her aunts. After the lapse of a few months her mother's place was occupied by a step-mother, who exercised too important an influence on the embryo authoress to allow of her being unceremoniously introduced.

Honora Sneyd was a daughter of a younger son of Ralph Sneyd, Esq., of Bishton, in Staffordshire. Her father having become a widower in early life, she was bred up under the care of Mrs. Seward, with her sworn friend, the famous Anna, and it was at Lichfield, in 1770, that Edgeworth first became acquainted with her, whilst on a visit to Day, the author of 'Sandford and Merton.' He has recorded his impressions in his Memoirs:

'During this intercourse, I perceived the superiority of Miss Honora Sneyd's capacity. Her memory was not copiously stored with poetry; and, though no way deficient, her knowledge had not been much enlarged by books; but her sentiments were on all subjects so just, and were delivered with such blushing modesty (though not without an air of conscious worth), as to command attention from everyone capable of appreciating female excellence. Her person was graceful, her features beautiful, and their expression such as to heighten the eloquence of everything she said. I was six-and-twenty; and now, for the first time in my life, I saw a woman that equalled the picture of perfection which existed in my imagination. I had long suffered from the want of that cheerfulness in a wife, without which marriage could not be agreeable to a man of such a temper as mine. I had borne this evil, I believe, with patience; but my not being happy at home exposed me to the danger of being too happy elsewhere.'

Miss Seward, in a note to her 'Monody on the Death of Major André,' asserts that, in a fit of despair at being jilted by this lady, André threw up his business as a merchant, entered the army, and met his untimely fate. Nor can we agree with Edgeworth that the assertion is satisfactorily refuted by the dates; for André's first commission was dated March 4th, 1771, prior to her marriage, but not necessarily prior to her rejection of his suit. He was certainly deeply attached to her; and so was Day, who wrote her an argumentative proposal, comprised in several sheets of paper, to which she wrote an equally long and argumentative refusal. The pith of his reasoning was that the best thing for her would be to live with him secluded from what is called the world; the pith of her reply being that she would rather live in it. On receiving this reply he took to his bed, and was profusely bled by his friend, Dr. Darwin; but speedily thought better of the matter, got up, rejoined the circle, and fell in love with her sister.

A stranger or more amusing set of people than were then collected at Lichfield it would be no easy matter to light upon; but they were people of principle, and in the midst of their own weaknesses could give one another good advice upon a pinch. Edgeworth tells us that Day could not see more plainly than himself the imprudence and folly of becoming too fond of an object which he could not hope to obtain. 'With all the eloquence of virtue and of friendship, he represented to me the danger, the criminality, of such an attachment. I knew that there is but one certain method of ending such dangers—*flight*.' He resolved to go abroad, and Day

determined to go abroad too, with the view of devoting a large portion of his time to the acquirement of those accomplishments (riding, dancing, fencing, &c.) which he had formerly treated with sovereign contempt. 'Miss Elizabeth Sneyd had convinced him that he could not with propriety abase or ridicule talents in which he appeared obviously deficient. As we are speaking of another future step-mother, it is hardly a digression to add that 'on her part she promised not to go to London, Bath, or any public place of amusement, till his return, and she engaged with alacrity to prosecute an excellent course of reading, which they had agreed upon before his departure.'

Abroad they went, and made Lyons their head-quarters for nearly two years, Edgeworth having undertaken to construct a new kind of ferry-boat across the Rhone and a bridge for wheelbarrows over a ravine. Mrs. Edgeworth, number one, joined him there; and as at the end of some months she returned at her own earnest request to England to be confined, she had small reason to complain of neglect, nor does she anywhere appear to have been disturbed by jealousy of a rival or successor. He distinctly states that he steadily adhered to the resolution he had formed on leaving England, never to keep up the slightest intercourse with the object of his irregular affection (the future number two) by letter, message, or inquiry. Mrs. Edgeworth died in childbirth, March 1773, and he instantly started for England where he met Day. The first words Day said to him were, 'Have you heard anything of Honora Sneyd?' On being answered in the negative, Day re-

sumed: 'My dear friend, while virtue and honour forbade you to think of her, I did everything in my power to separate you; but now that you are both at liberty, I have used the utmost expedition to reach you on your arrival in England, that I might be the first to tell you that Honora is in perfect health and beauty; improved in person and in mind, and, though surrounded by lovers, still her own mistress.'

We cannot help suspecting that the fascinating Honora had an instinctive prescience of coming events, and that her heart was not altogether unoccupied when she transferred Day to her sister, and unwittingly hurried poor André to his fate. Neither do we put implicit faith in the widowed suitor's confusion and unconsciousness at their first meeting, when he avers: 'I have been told that the last person whom I addressed or saw, when I came into the room, was Honora Sneyd. This I do not remember; but I am perfectly sure that, when I did see her, she appeared to me most lovely, even more lovely than when we parted. What her sentiments might be it was impossible to divine. My addresses were, after some time, permitted and approved; and, with the consent of her father, Miss Honora Sneyd and I were married (1773) by special license, in the ladies' choir, in the Cathedral at Lichfield.'

They were married on the 17th July; a rather hasty proceeding, unless there is an error of a year, which would make the period of probation improbably long. Immediately after the ceremony they went to Ireland; and here the narrative is taken up in the second page of the Memoir:

'On Mr. Edgeworth's marriage with Honora Sneyd, Maria accompanied them to Ireland. Of this visit she recollected very little, except that she was a mischievous child, amusing herself once at her aunt Fox's when the company were unmindful of her, cutting out the squares in a checked sofa-cover, and one day trampling through a number of hot-bed frames that had just been glazed, laid on the grass before the door at Edgeworth-Town. She recollected her delight at the crashing of the glass, but, immorally, did not remember either cutting her feet or how she was punished for this performance.'

Her step-mother was to her all that the most affectionate mother could have been, and had the happy art of inspiring perfect confidence along with a degree of admiration approaching to awe. 'The surpassing beauty of her presence struck Maria, young as she was, at their first acquaintance: she remembered standing by her dressing-table, and looking up at her with a sudden feeling of—how beautiful!' This estimable lady's health unfortunately began to fail in 1778, and Maria, then in her eighth year, was placed at school at Derby, with a Mrs. Lataffiere, who was always kindly remembered by her pupil, although the writing-master of this establishment earned the most lasting title to her gratitude and that of her correspondents by teaching her to write the beautiful hand which she retained to the end of her life. She said that, on the first day of her entrance in the schoolroom, she felt more admiration for a child, less than herself, who could repeat the nine parts of speech than she ever felt afterwards for any effort of human genius.

The first of the printed letters from Edgeworth to his daughter, is dated April 6th, 1780, and the method he pursued with her may be collected from it: 'It would be very agreeable to me, my dear Maria, to have letters from you familiarly: I wish to know what you like and what you dislike: I wish to communicate to you what little knowledge I have acquired, that you may have a tincture of every species of literature, and form your taste by choice and not by chance.' The same tone is taken in the only printed letter from Mrs. Honora Edgeworth to her daughter-in-law, dated October 10, 1779, in which, after impressing that it is in vain to attempt to please a person who will not tell us what they do and what they do not desire, she continues: 'It is very agreeable to me to think of conversing with you as my equal in every respect but age, and of my making that inequality of use to you, by giving you the advantage of the experience I have had, and the observations I have been able to make, as these are parts of knowledge, which nothing but time can bestow.' On May 2, 1780, Edgeworth writes:—

'My dear Daughter,—At six o'clock on Sunday morning your excellent mother expired in my arms. She now lies dead beside me, and I know I am doing what would give her pleasure, if she were capable of feeling anything, by writing to you at this time to fix her excellent image in your mind. . . . Continue, my dear daughter, the desire which you feel of becoming amiable, prudent, and of use. The ornamental parts of a character, with such an understanding as yours, necessarily ensue: but true judgment and sagacity in the choice of friends, and the regulation of your

behaviour can be had only from reflection and from being thoroughly convinced of what experience teaches in general too late, that to be happy we must be good.

'God bless you, and make you ambitious of that valuable praise which the amiable character of your dear mother forces from the virtuous and the wise. My writing to you in my present situation will, my dearest daughter, be remembered by you as the strongest proof of the love of your approving and affectionate father.'

At one of the Provençal Courts of Love in the thirteenth century the question was argued whether a second marriage by man or woman be or be not complimentary to the deceased partner in the first. Edgeworth had no hesitation in deciding this question in the affirmative, backed as he was by the authority of his second wife. She enjoined him on her death-bed to marry her sister Elizabeth, who had flung over Day after he had undergone a regular gymnastic training for her sake:—

'Nothing is more erroneous than the common belief, that a man who has lived in the greatest happiness with one wife will be the most averse to take another. On the contrary, the loss of happiness which he feels when he loses her necessarily urges him to endeavour to be again placed in a situation which had constituted his former felicity.

'I felt that Honora had judged wisely, and from a thorough knowledge of my character, when she had advised me to marry again as soon as I could meet with a woman who would make a good mother to my children and an agreeable companion to me. She had formed an idea, that her sister Elizabeth was better suited to me than any other woman; and thought that I was equally well suited to her. Of all Honora's sisters I had seen the least of Elizabeth.'

If ever there were such things as marriages made in heaven, three of Edgeworth's might be so described, for they were extremely happy marriages, although the circumstances under which they were brought about were irreconcilable with all ordinary rules and probabilities. Elizabeth Sneyd, when the successorship was first proposed by her dying sister, revolted at it: 'Not only,' observes Edgeworth, 'because I was her sister's husband, and because she had another attachment'—pretty strong grounds in the common mundane point of view—'but, independently of these circumstances, as she distinctly said, I was the last man of her acquaintance that she should have thought of for a husband; and certainly, notwithstanding her beauty, abilities, and polished manners, I believed she was as little suited to me.'

But there's a divinity that shapes our ends: the two negatives made an affirmative: the antipathy grew into sympathy: the other attachment was shaken off: the religious scruple was got over: and one fine morning in the December of 1780 (less than eight months after the death of number two), the widower and the sister of his deceased wife met to be married in the parish church of Scarborough. At this critical point there was a hitch. The clergyman was so alarmed by a letter 'as to make it cruel to press him to perform the ceremony.' So the couple separated. The bride expectant started with her friend, Lady Holte, for Bath: the bridegroom hurried to London with his children, took lodgings in Gray's Inn, and had the banns published three times in St. Andrew's Church, Holborn. When all was ready for a second attempt,

she came from Bath, 'and on Christmas Day, 1780, was married to me in the presence of my first wife's brother, Mr. Elers, his lady, and Mr. Day'—just the very last people we should have expected to see at the celebration. It will be remembered that, prior to the Statute of 5 and 6 William IV. c. 64, marriages within the Levitical degrees were voidable, not void, and if not invalidated during the lifetime of both parties, held good to all intents and purposes.

Neither the death of Honora, nor the courtship of Elizabeth with its embarrassments, appear to have diminished the care with which Edgeworth watched over the mental training of his daughter: for on May 25, 1780, he writes from Lichfield:—

'I also beg that you will send me a tale, about the length of a "Spectator," upon the subject of Generosity; it must be taken from history or romance, and must be sent the day se'nnight after you receive this, and I beg you will take some pains about it.

'The same subject (we are informed in the Memoir) was given at the same time to a young gentleman from Oxford, then at Lichfield. When the two stories were completed, they were given to Mr. William Sneyd, Mr. Edgeworth's brother-in-law, to decide on their merits; he pronounced Maria's to be very much the best: "an excellent story, and extremely well written; but where's the Generosity?" A saying which became a sort of proverb with her afterwards. It was Maria's first story; but it has not been preserved; she used to say that there was in it a sentence of inextricable confusion between a saddle, a man, and his horse.'

In the same year, 1780, she was removed from Mrs. Lataffiere's to the fashionable establishment of Mrs.

Davis in Upper Wimpole Street. 'Even in the midst of the embarrassment of the introduction to her new mistress, she was struck by the reflected effect in Mrs. Davis's countenance of her father's air and address when he brought her to the school.' Whatever the effect of his air and address on others, he certainly contrived to impress wife after wife, and every one of his many children by each of them, with the conviction that he had not his equal upon earth. Mrs. Davis, it is stated, treated Maria with kindness and consideration, though she was neither beautiful nor fashionable, and gave her the full benefit of an invention for drawing out young ladies, which, we hope, died out with this establishment. 'Excellent masters were in attendance, and Maria went through all the usual tortures of back boards, iron collars, and dumbbells, with the unusual one of being swung by the neck to draw out the muscles, and increase the growth, a signal failure in her case.' Did it succeed in any case? There is a story of a wry-necked Prince of Condé falling in the hunting field, and coming to himself just in time to stop the peasants who picked him up in a well-intended effort to pull him straight; but the notion of pulling out a young lady like a telescope was surely peculiar to a 'finishing' school. By a parity of reason they should be made to stand with weights on their heads when they are growing too fast.

Maria had so little taste for music that the music-master advised her to give up learning to play on the pianoforte. 'He, however, underrated her powers of ear,' remarks her third step-mother, 'for when I knew

her she enjoyed good music, and at Mrs. Davis's she learned to dance well, and liked it. She delighted to remember the pleasure she felt in the perfect time in which her companions executed a favourite dance of that day, Slingsby's Allemand.' The probabilities are, notwithstanding, all in favour of the music-master who gives up a pupil; and an ear for time is not unfrequently deficient in the sensibility which constitutes a good ear for music. Miss Edgeworth was about upon a par with Jeremy in 'Love for Love' in this respect; 'Yes, I have a reasonable good ear, sir, as to jigs and country dances, and the like. I don't much matter your solos and sonatas.'

On the other hand she had a great facility for learning languages, and she found her Italian and French exercises so easy that she wrote off those given out for the whole quarter at once, keeping them strung together in her desk, and read for amusement whilst the other girls were labouring at their tasks. 'Her favourite seat during playtime was under a high ebony cabinet which stood at one end of the schoolroom; and here she often remained so completely absorbed by the book she was reading as to be perfectly deaf to all the noises around her, only occasionally startled into consciousness of it by some unusual uproar. This early habit of concentrated attention, perhaps inherent in minds of great genius, continued through life.' It is so inherent, so inseparable, as to have been sometimes thought identical with genius; which Buffon defines, a superior aptitude to patience. Another noteworthy trait of this period has been preserved. 'She was remembered by her com-

panions, both at Mrs. Lataffiere's and Mrs. Davis's, for her entertaining stories; and she learnt, with all the tact of an improvisatrice, to know which story was most successful by the unmistakable evidence of her auditors' wakefulness, when she narrated at night for those who were in the bedroom with her.'

She was taken from school in 1782, and went with her father and the rest of the family to Edgeworth-Town, her home for the remainder of her life. Her first impressions are fortunately set down in her continuation of her father's Memoirs:

'I accompanied my father to Ireland. Before this time I had not, except during a few months of my childhood, ever been in that country; therefore everything there was new to me; and though I was then but *twelve years old*, and though such a length of time has since elapsed, I have retained a clear and strong recollection of our arrival at Edgeworth-Town.

'Things and persons are so much improved in Ireland of latter days, that only those who can remember how they were some thirty or forty years ago can conceive the variety of domestic grievances which, in those times, assailed the master of a family, immediately upon his arrival at his Irish home. Wherever he turned his eyes, in or out of his house, damp, dilapidation, waste! appeared. Painting, glazing, roofing, fencing, finishing—all were wanting.

'The backyard, and even the front lawn round the windows of the house, were filled with loungers, followers, and petitioners; tenants, undertenants, drivers, sub-agent and agent, were to have audience; and they all had grievances and secret informations, accusations reciprocating, and quarrels each under each interminable.'

She could never have been guilty of the weakness which Mr. Croker laboured so hard to fix on Madame d'Arblay; but she was undoubtedly in her sixteenth year in 1782, and both memoirs concur in fixing the permanent return to Ireland in that year. She continues:

'I was with him constantly, and I was amused and interested in seeing how he made his way through these complaints, petitions, and grievances, with decision and despatch; he, all the time, in good humour with the people, and they delighted with him; though he often "rated them roundly," when they stood before him perverse in litigation, helpless in procrastination, detected in cunning, or convicted of falsehood. They saw into his character, almost as soon as he understood theirs. The first remark which I heard whispered aside among the people, with congratulatory looks at each other, was—"His honour, any way, is *good pay*."

'It was said of the celebrated King of Prussia, that "he scolded like a trooper, and paid like a prince." Such a man would be liked in Ireland! but there is a higher description of character, which (give them but time to know it) the Irish would infinitely prefer. One who paid, not like a prince but like a man of sense and humanity.'

It is new to us that the celebrated King of Prussia paid like a prince. Even Mr. Caryle has not endowed him with that merit; but we have no doubt that Mr. Edgeworth paid like a man of sense and humanity; and details enough are given by his daughter to prove that he resolutely pursued the precise course which a resident landlord should pursue, to remedy the worst evils of that unhappy country. He had no dealings with middlemen. He received his rents without the intervention of agent or sub-agent. He chose his tenants

for their character. The sole claims to preference were industry, honesty, and sobriety. He resisted subdivision. He made no difference between Catholic and Protestant, Saxon and Celt; and his sound administration of justice grew into a proverb. Our immediate object, however, in referring to his domestic arrangements and way of life is to show how materials for the future novelist accumulated and were hived up:

'Some men live with their family, without letting them know their affairs; and, however great may be their affection and esteem for their wives and children, think that they have nothing to do with business.—This was not my father's way of thinking.—On the contrary, not only his wife but his children knew all his affairs. Whatever business he had to do was done in the midst of his family, usually in the common sitting-room: so that we were intimately acquainted, not only with his general principles of conduct, but with the most minute details of their every-day application. I further enjoyed some peculiar advantages:—he kindly wished to give me habits of business; and for this purpose, allowed me during many years to assist him in copying his letters of business, and in receiving his rents.'

Within visiting distance of Edgeworth-Town was Pakenham Hall, the residence of Lord Longford, where a large family was growing up, including 'Kitty Pakenham,' the future Duchess of Wellington. Here Miss Edgeworth became acquainted with Mrs. Greville, the author of the 'Ode to Indifference,' and many other people of distinction. Another neighbouring house was Castle Forbes, the residence of the Earl of Granard, where a various and agreeable society assembled,

especially when Lady Granard's mother, Lady Moira, was staying there. The times, again, were highly favourable for the observer who wished to see national characteristics called out and placed in broad relief. The stirring, exciting, elevating influence of the great Volunteer movement was in full operation during the early years of Miss Edgeworth's residence in Ireland; and she was in the thick of the rebellion in 1798. There is no reason to suppose, however, that either her father or herself foresaw the line of composition in which she was destined to win fame; and his principal care was that she should acquire clearness of thought and accuracy of expression.

In the autumn of 1782 she began at his suggestion to translate Madame de Genlis's 'Adèle et Théodore;' and she had completed one volume, when Holcroft's translation appeared. The time spent on this work, we are told, was not regarded as misspent: it fixed her handwriting, and gave her 'a readiness and choice of words which only translation reaches.' Day, who had a horror of female authorship, was shocked at her having been permitted even to translate, and wrote a congratulatory letter to Edgeworth when the publication was prevented. It was from the recollection of his arguments (she states), and of her father's reply, that 'Letters for Literary Ladies' were written nearly ten years afterwards. 'They were not published, nor was anything of ours published, till some time after Mr. Day's death (in 1789). Though sensible that there was much prejudice mixed with his reasons, yet deference for his friend's judgment prevailed with my

father and made him dread for his daughter the name of authoress. Yet, though publication was out of our thoughts, as subjects occurred, many essays and tales were written for private amusement.' This delay was fortunate; it gave her powers time to ripen; she wrote because her mind was full, and having been originally forced into the observance of the Horatian maxim—*nonumque prematur in annum*—she afterwards abided by it of her own free choice and at her father's suggestion. 'He would sometimes advise me to lay by what was done for several months and turn my mind to something else, that we might look back at it afterwards with fresh eyes.'

The peasant poet, Clare, touchingly alludes to the hard pressure which compels the writer for bread to 'forestall the blighted harvest of the brain.' But want is a more allowable, and not a more deleterious, stimulant than vanity, or that morbid longing for publicity which is now inundating us with trash; and, if ladies and gentlemen who are eager to appear in print could only be advised to take example from Miss Edgeworth, they would save their friends an infinity of trouble and vexation besides improving their own chances of success.

The first story which Maria wrote, after the tale on 'Generosity,' was 'The Bracelets,' and some of the others now in the 'Parents' Assistant' and 'Early Lessons.' 'Dog Trusty and the Honest Boy,' and the 'Thief,' were written at this time (1791). She used to write her stories on a slate, then read them out to her sisters, and if they were approved, she copied them

This is Mrs. Edgeworth's account in the Memoir, but her own gives her a larger and more miscellaneous set of judges. She says that her father called upon the whole family to hear and judge of all they were writing, and adds:

'Whenever I thought of writing anything, I always told him my first rough plans; and always, with the instinct of a good critic, he used to fix immediately upon that which would best answer the purpose.—"*Sketch that and show it to me.*"—These words, from the experience of his sagacity, never failed to inspire me with hope of success. It was then sketched. Sometimes, when I was fond of a particular part, I used to dilate on it in the sketch; but to this he always objected—"I don't want any of your painting—none of your drapery!—I can imagine all that—let me see the bare skeleton."'

We quote these passages because they have been unaccountably overlooked in appreciating the share which Edgeworth had in his daughter's writings and determining the extent to which she was indebted to him for her fame. We shall show in the proper place that the entire conception of her best known work must be credited to him.

Prior to 1791, the information is meagre, and there are only two letters from Maria; one to Miss Charlotte Sneyd, and one to Mrs. Ruxton (her paternal aunt), the first of a series which continued forty-two years. Dating from this period her letters form the principal contents of the volumes. As already intimated, they are admirable; but, like all family letters, not excepting those of Madame de Sévigné, they contain a good

deal of matter which has no intrinsic worth although it forms an indispensable setting for the rest. The number of remarkable people she fell in with and commemorates from the earliest period is extraordinary. One of these, Dr. Darwin, must have won Edgeworth's heart at once by his definition of a fool: 'A fool, Mr. Edgeworth, you know, is a man who never tried an experiment in his life.' If, reversing this theory, we are to estimate a man's wisdom by the number of experiments he tried, the seven sages of Greece and the wise men from the East together would have been no match for her father. On March 9, 1792, she writes from Clifton, where she was on a visit to a married sister, Mrs. King:

'My father has just returned from Dr. Darwin's where he has been nearly three weeks; they were extremely kind, and pressed him very much to take a house in or near Derby for the summer. He has been, as Dr. Darwin expressed it, "breathing the breath of life into the brazen lungs of a clock," which he had made at Edgeworth-Town as a present for him. He saw the first part of Dr. Darwin's "Botanic Garden;" 900*l.* was what his bookseller gave him for the whole! On his return from Derby, my father spent a day with Mr. Kier, the great chemist, at Birmingham: he was speaking to him of the late discovery of fulminating silver, with which I suppose your ladyship is well acquainted, though it be new to Henry and me. A lady and gentleman went into a laboratory where a few grains of fulminating silver were lying in a mortar: the gentleman as he was talking happened to stir it with the end of his cane, which was tipped with iron,—the fulminating silver exploded instantly, and blew the lady, the gentleman, and the whole laboratory to pieces! Take care how you go into laboratories

with gentlemen, unless they are, like Sir Plume, skilled in the "nice conduct" of their canes.'[1]

Her mode of pointing or capping a remark by a quotation or a good story is one marked attraction of her letters:

'Anna was extremely sorry that she could not see you again before she left Ireland; but you will soon be in the same kingdom again, and that is one great point gained, as Mr. Weaver, a travelling astronomical lecturer, who carried the universe about in a box, told us. "Sir," said he to my father, "when you look at a map, do you know that the east is always on your right hand, and the west on your left?" "Yes," replied my father with a very modest look, "I believe I do." "Well," said the man of learning; "that's one great point gained."'

She was at no time much given to sentimentality or to what is popularly understood by romance: 'I had much rather (she writes in 1793) make a bargain with anyone I loved to read the same book with them at the same hour, than to look at the moon like Rousseau's famous lovers.' Speaking of Carnarvon Castle, and the impression of sublimity made on her by its grandeur in decay, she naively adds: 'I believe these old castles interest one by calling up ideas of past times, which are in such strange contrast with the present.' Describing a large and gloomy apartment which she occupied at Bruges, she says: 'I am sure Mrs. Radcliffe might have kept her heroine wandering about this room for six

[1] 'Sir Plume, of amber snuff-box justly vain,
And the nice conduct of a clouded cane.'
The Rape of the Lock.

good pages. When we meet I will tell Margaret of the night Charlotte and I spent in this room, and the footsteps we heard creak—just a room and just a night to suit her taste.'

The sober, sensible, rational view of love which she uniformly takes in her novels is expressed in a letter dated May 16, 1798, to Miss Beaufort, then on the point of becoming her third step-mother:

'Amongst the many kindnesses my father has shown me, the greatest, I think, has been his permitting me to see his heart *à découvert*; and I have seen by your kind sincerity and his, that, in good and cultivated minds, love is no idle passion, but one that inspires useful and generous energy. I have been convinced by your example of what I was always inclined to believe, that the power of feeling affection is increased by the cultivation of the understanding. The wife of an Indian Yogii (if a Yogii be permitted to have a wife) might be a very affectionate woman, but her sympathy with her husband could not have a very extensive sphere. As his eyes are to be continually fixed upon the point of his nose, hers in duteous sympathy must squint in like manner; and if the perfection of his virtue be to sit so still that the birds (*vide* Sacontala) may, unmolested, build nests in his hair, his wife cannot better show her affection than by yielding her tresses to them with similar patient stupidity. Are there not European Yogiis, or men whose ideas do not go much further than *le bout du nez*? And how delightful it must be to be chained for better for worse to one of this species. I should guess—for I know nothing of the matter—that the courtship of an ignorant lover must be almost as insipid as a marriage with him; for "my jewel" continually repeated, without new setting, must surely fatigue a little.'

The same letter contains some excellent remarks on the manner in which familiarity and cordiality should be met, and due distinctions observed, in social or domestic relations:

'I flatter myself that you will find me gratefully exact *en belle fille*. I think there is a great deal of difference between that species of ceremony which exists with acquaintance, and that which should always exist with the best of friends: the one prevents the growth of affection, the other preserves it in youth and age. Many foolish people make fine plantations, and forget to fence them: so the young trees are destroyed by the young cattle, and the bark of the forest trees is sometimes injured. You need not, dear Miss Beaufort, fence yourself round with strong palings in this family, where all have been early accustomed to mind their boundaries. As for me, you see my intentions, or at least my theories, are good enough: if my practice be but half as good, you will be content, will you not? But theory was born in Brobdingnag, and practice in Lilliput. So much the better for me.'

The rapidity with which Mr. Edgeworth's marriages succeeded each other was not the least remarkable circumstance connected with them; and, although there is no evidence to justify the presumption, his ill-wishers may be pardoned for suspecting that he did not invariably observe the maxim, 'Tis good to be off with the old love (or wife), before you are on with the new.' His third wife died in November, 1797; and he was married to the fourth in May, 1798, the ceremony being performed by her brother, the Rev. William Beaufort. The time was curiously chosen, for the rebellion had broken out, and their wedding-trip to Edgeworth-Town

lay through the disturbed districts. One of the objects that sorely tried the nerves of the bride was an improvised gallows in the shape of a car standing on end, with the shafts in the air, and a man hanging between them.

An eminent critic (in the 'Quarterly Review') accused Miss Edgeworth of indelicacy in so readily sanctioning her father's marriages, and transferring her dutiful affections at his bidding. That she did so is extraordinary, but not necessarily wrong. With regard to the last, she states that it was not till 1798, after the third wife's death, during a visit of the Beaufort family at Edgeworth-Town, that he formed the attachment to Miss Beaufort:

'When I first knew of this attachment, and before I was well acquainted with her, I own I did not wish for the marriage. I had not my father's quick penetration into character: I did not at first see the superior abilities or qualities which he discovered; nor did I anticipate any of the happy consequences from this union which he foresaw. All that I thought, I told him. With the most kind patience he bore with me, and, instead of withdrawing his affection, honoured me the more with his confidence.'

All resistance and repugnance were overcome by his eloquence or pertinacity, and he closes a letter to Day about a bust, the upas tree, frogs, agriculture, a heating apparatus, and a speaking machine, with this passage:

'And now for my piece of news, which I have kept for the last. I am going to be married to a young lady of small fortune and large accomplishments,—compared with my age, much youth (not quite 30), and more prudence—

some beauty, more sense—uncommon talents, more uncommon temper,—liked by my family, loved by me. If I can say all this three years hence, shall not I have been a fortunate, not to say a wise man?'

He *was* able to say it all at the end of three years and long afterwards; he *was* a fortunate man, and (if the judicious adaptation of means to the grand end of human life, happiness, be wisdom) a wise man. There is positively no accounting for his career without allowing him self-knowledge, keen insight into character, moral courage, and strong volition. He was open to conviction, but, till he was convinced of the erroneousness of an opinion, he retained and acted on it. He never 'complied against his will,' and he resolutely set all wise saws and modern instances at defiance when he had deliberately made up his mind upon a point.

In a letter from Edgeworth-Town, November 19th, 1798, we find:—

'In the "Monthly Review" for October there is this anecdote. After the King of Denmark, who was somewhat silly, had left Paris, a Frenchman, who was in company with the Danish ambassador, but did not know him, began to ridicule the king—"*Ma foi, il a une tête, une tête*"—"*Couronnée*," replied the ambassador, with presence of mind and politeness. My father, who was much delighted with this answer, asked Lovell, Henry, and Sneyd, without telling the right answer, what they would have said:

Lovell: "A head—and a heart, sir."

Henry: "A head—upon his shoulders."

Sneyd: "A head—of a king."

Tell me which answer you like best. Richard will take your "Practical Education" to you.'

'Practical Education,' so runs the comment in the Memoir, 'was published this year (1798), and was praised and abused enough to render the authors immediately famous.' It was praised in the 'Monthly Review,' which devoted two long articles to a careful analysis of the contents. These were of the most miscellaneous description, and include everything that can affect the mental or physical training of a reasonable being. It was abused in the 'British Critic' on religious grounds: 'Here, readers, is education *à la mode*, in the true style of modern philosophy; nearly eight hundred quarto pages on practical education, and not a word on God, religion, Christianity, or a hint that such topics are ever to be mentioned.' This indignant ultra-Christian might just as well have asserted that there was not a word on courage and chastity, or a hint that such things are ever to be mentioned:

'On religion and politics (they say in their preface) we have been silent, because we have no ambition to gain partisans or to make proselytes. The scrutinising eye of criticism, in looking over our table of contents, will also probably observe that there are no chapters on courage and chastity. To pretend to teach courage to Britons would be as ridiculous as it is unnecessary; and except to those who are exposed to the contagion of foreign manners, we may boast of the superior delicacy of our fair countrywomen.'

Here Edgeworth stands confessed. Their respective shares in the work are stated in the preface. All that relates to the art of teaching to read in the chapter on tasks, the chapters on grammar and classical literature, geography, chronology, arithmetic, geometry, and me-

chanics, were written by the father, and the rest of the book (more than two-thirds) by the daughter.

Although the name of Edgeworth first acquired literary notoriety by 'Practical Education,' she had already been twice before the public in her own name and on her own account. 'Letters for Literary Ladies' was published in 1795, and the 'Parent's Assistant' in 1796. Writing to her cousin, Miss Ruxton, she says:—'I beg, dear Sophy, that you will not call my little stories by the sublime title of my works: I shall else be ashamed when the little mouse comes forth. The stories are printed and bound the same size as "Evenings at Home," and I am afraid you will dislike the title; my father had sent the "Parent's Friend," but Mr. Johnson (the publisher) has degraded it into the "Parent's Assistant" (which I dislike particularly) from association with an old book of arithmetic called the "Tutor's Assistant."'

She first struck into her peculiar vein in 'Castle Rackrent' (1800), in which the habits and manners of that strange variety of the species, the Irish landlord of the eighteenth century, are depicted to the life. The first edition was published without her name, and the first notice of it in the Memoir runs:—'In 1801 a second edition of "Castle Rackrent" was published by Maria Edgeworth, and its success was so triumphant that some one—I heard his name at the time, but do not now remember it—not only asserted that he was the author, but actually took the trouble to copy out several pages with corrections and erasures as if it was his original MS.' In November, 1802, Miss Edgeworth

writes from Paris—'"Castle Rackrent" has been translated into German, and we saw in a French book an extract from it, giving the wake, the confinement of Lady Cathcart, and *sweeping the stairs with the wig*, as common and universal occurrences in that extraordinary kingdom.' Swift's ironical proposal to relieve the Irish poor by converting their children into food for the rich, was seriously adduced by a French writer to illustrate the horrid extremities to which the country had been reduced.

'Belinda' was published in 1801, and was highly popular. 'Moral Tales' was also published in 1801, with a preface by her father, in which he explains that the tales have been written by her to illustrate the opinions delivered in 'Practical Education,' and describes the moral object of each—the most effective mode of repelling readers that could well be contrived by an admiring parent. The 'Essay on Irish Bulls' was published in 1802, in their joint names, and was reviewed by Sydney Smith. Of course he could not resist the temptation of quizzing Edgeworth, whom, for that purpose, he insists on treating as the chief, if not sole, partner in the firm of Edgeworth & Co.; but, whilst condemning the rambling style of the composition, his criticism is favourable. 'The firm drew tears from us in the stories of Little Dominick and of the Irish Beggar who killed his sweetheart. Never was grief more natural or more simple.' Her own account of this book cannot be passed over:

'After "Practical Education," the next book which we published in partnership was the "Essay on Irish Bulls."

The first design of this Essay was his (her father's):—under the semblance of attack, he wished to show the English public the eloquence, wit, and talents of the lower classes of people in Ireland. Working zealously upon the ideas which he suggested, sometimes, what was spoken by him, was afterwards written by me; or when I wrote my first thoughts, they were corrected and improved by him: so that no book was ever written more completely in partnership.

'On this, as on most subjects, whether light or serious, when we wrote together, it would now be difficult, almost impossible, to recollect, which thoughts originally were his, and which were mine. All passages in which there are Latin quotations or classical allusions must be his exclusively, *because I am entirely ignorant of the learned languages.* The notes on the Dublin shoe-black's metaphorical language, I recollect, are chiefly his.

'I have heard him tell that story with all the natural, indescribable Irish tones and gestures, of which written language can give but a faint idea. He excelled in imitating the Irish because he never overstepped the modesty or the *assurance* of nature. He marked exquisitely the happy confidence, the shrewd wit of the people, without condescending to produce effect by caricature.'

The speech (she adds) of the poor freeholder to a candidate, in the chapter entitled 'Irish Wit and Eloquence,' was made to her father, and written down by her within a few hours from his dictation. In the same chapter are the complaint of the poor widow against her landlord, and his reply, quoted in Campbell's 'Lectures on Eloquence,' under a notion that they were fictitious. She declares them to be unembellished facts: her father being the magistrate before whom the rival orators appeared.

Mrs. Edgeworth relates that a gentleman much interested in improving the breed of Irish cattle, sent, on seeing the advertisement, for the work on Irish Bulls: 'he was rather confounded by the appearance of the classical bull at the top of the first page which I had designed from a gem, and when he began to read the book he threw it away in disgust: he had purchased it as secretary to the Irish Agricultural Society.'

In the autumn of 1802, during the peace of Amiens, Mr. and Mrs. Edgeworth, their two daughters and Maria, went to Paris, taking Belgium in their way. Her account of their travels is lively and sensible, and they appear to have known almost everybody worth knowing: Madame Récamier, Comte and Comtesse de Ségur, La Harpe, Suard, Boissy d'Anglas, Montmorenci, Camille Jordan, Kosciusko, and Lally Tollendal are specially mentioned. One long letter is entirely filled with a visit to Madame de Genlis, who is admirably described. But we can only afford room for Madame d'Houdetot, the Julie of Rousseau, with whom they breakfasted at the Abbé Marellet's:

'Julie is now seventy-two years of age, a thin woman in a little black bonnet: she appeared to me shockingly ugly; she squints so much that it is impossible to tell which way she is looking: but no sooner did I hear her speak than I began to like her; and no sooner was I seated beside her, than I began to find in her countenance a most benevolent and agreeable expression. She entered into conversation immediately: her manner invited and could not fail to obtain confidence. She seems as gay and open-hearted as a girl of seventeen. It has been said of her that she not only never did any harm, but never suspected any. . . . I wish I could at seventy-two be such a woman!

'She told me that Rousseau, whilst he was writing so finely on education and leaving his own children in the Foundling Hospital, defended himself with so much eloquence that even those who blamed him in their hearts, could not find tongues to answer him. Once at a dinner at Madame d'Houdetot's there was a fine pyramid of fruit. Rousseau in helping himself took the peach which formed the base of the pyramid, and the rest fell immediately. "Rousseau," said she, "that is what you always do with all our systems, you pull down with a single touch, but who will build up what you pull down?" I asked if he was grateful for all the kindness shown to him? "No; he was ungrateful: he had a thousand bad qualities, but I turned my attention from them to his genius and the good he had done mankind."'

One sentence in her general estimate came upon us by surprise: 'I have never heard any person talk of dress or fashion since we came to Paris, and very little scandal. A scandalmonger would be starved here.'

The grand event of her—of every woman's—life came to pass at this period. On quitting Paris in March, 1803, she could say for the first time, *Ich habe gelebt und geliebet* (I have lived and loved). Abruptly closing her catalogue of new acquaintance, she adds:

'Here, my dear aunt, I was interrupted in a manner that will surprise you as much as it surprised me, by the coming in of Monsieur Edelcrantz, a Swedish gentleman, whom we have mentioned to you, of superior understanding and mild manners: he came to offer me his hand and heart!!

'My heart, you may suppose, cannot return his attachment, for I have seen but very little of him, and have not had time to have formed any judgment, except that I think nothing could tempt me to leave my own dear friends and my own country to live in Sweden.'

In a letter to her cousin on 8th December, 1802 (the proposal was on the 1st), after explaining that M. Edelcrantz was bound to Sweden by ties of duty as strong as those which bound her to Edgeworth-Town, she writes: 'This is all very reasonable, but reasonable for him only, not for me; and I have never felt anything for him but esteem and gratitude.' Commenting on this passage, Mrs. Edgeworth says:

'Maria was mistaken as to her own feelings. She refused M. Edelcrantz, but she felt much more for him than esteem and admiration: she was extremely in love with him. Mr. Edgeworth left her to decide for herself; but she saw too plainly what it would be to us to lose her, and what she would feel at parting from us. She decided rightly for her own future happiness and for that of her family, but she suffered much at the time and long afterwards. While we were at Paris, I remember that in a shop where Charlotte and I were making some purchases, Maria sat apart absorbed in thought, and so deep in reverie, that when her father came in and stood opposite to her, she did not see him till he spoke to her, when she started and burst into tears. . . . I do not think she repented of her refusal, or regretted her decision; she was well aware that she could not have made him happy, that she would not have suited his position at the Court of Stockholm, and that her want of beauty might have diminished his attachment. It was better perhaps she should think so, as it calmed her mind; but from what I saw of M. Edelcrantz, I think he was a man capable of really valuing her. I believe that he was much attached to her, and deeply mortified at her refusal. He continued to reside in Sweden after the abdication of his master, and was always distinguished for his high character and great abilities. He never married. He was, except very fine eyes, remarkably plain.'

This is an interesting and instructive episode. It lets in a flood of light upon those passages of her writings which inculcate the stern control of the feelings,—the never-ceasing vigilance with which prudence and duty are to stand sentinel over the heart. So then, she had actually undergone the hard trials she imposes and describes. They best can paint them who can feel them most. She was no Madame d'Aubray, with ideas of self-sacrifice admirably adapted for others' uses but disagreeably unfitted for her own; and before setting down her precepts of self-command under temptation, she had tested them. Caroline Percy (in 'Patronage') controlling her love for Count Altenberg, is Maria Edgeworth subduing *her* love for the Chevalier Edelcrantz.

On the 27th January, 1803, Edgeworth received a peremptory order from the French Government to quit Paris, and he went to Passy with his daughter, whilst his friends investigated the cause. It turned out to be a belief that he was the brother of the Abbé Edgeworth, who had attended Louis Seize on the scaffold. So soon as the exact degree of relationship was made known through Lord Whitworth, the order was withdrawn; but they received private information which induced them to leave France, just time enough to get away. Lovell, the eldest son, was stopped on his journey from Geneva to Paris, and remained a *détenu* till the end of the war in 1814.

'After our return, Maria immediately occupied herself with preparing for the press "Popular Tales," which were published this year (1803). She also began

"Émilie de Coulanges," "Madame de Fleury," and "Ennui," and wrote "Leonora," with the romantic purpose I have already mentioned.' The romantic purpose was to please the Chevalier Edelcrantz. It was written in the style he preferred; and 'the idea of what he would think of it (says Mrs. Edgeworth) was, I believe, present to her in every page she wrote. She never heard that he had even read it.' She also found time to write 'Griselda' at odd moments in her own room.

'Popular Tales' appeared in 1804, with, as usual, a preface by the father, which might have been spared: *e.g.* 'Burke supposes that there are eighty thousand readers in Great Britain, nearly one hundredth part of its inhabitants. Out of these we may calculate that ten thousand are nobility, clergy, or gentlemen of the learned professions. Of seventy thousand readers which remain, there are many who might be amused and instructed by books which were not professedly adapted to the classes which have been enumerated. With this view the following volumes have been composed.' We can hardly think so, even on the paternal assurance. The heroes and heroines do not belong to the nobility, clergy, or gentry, it is true. They are mostly farmers or tradespeople. Leonard Ludgate, in 'Out of Debt out of Danger,' is the only son and heir of a London haberdasher, who marries Miss Bella Perkins, a would-be fine lady.[1] But is this a reason why these tales should be less adapted, professedly or unprofessedly, to

[1] It is a coincidence worth mentioning that the plot of this story is in parts identical with that of *Maison Neuve*, a comedy, by M. Victorien Sardou, author of *La Famille Benoiton*.

the upper ten thousand? Is the class of readers determined by the rank in life of the persons who figure in a novel? Do the nobility throw it aside disdainfully when they find that it does not deal with nobility, or do people of humble birth, or ungenteel callings, lay it down with despair when it brings them face to face with a clergyman, a barrister, or a lord? Some such notion was obviously in Mr. Edgeworth's mind when he penned this preface.

The first series of 'Tales of Fashionable Life,' published in 1809, contained 'Ennui,' 'Madame de Fleury,' 'The Dun,' 'Manœuvring,' and 'Almeria;' the second, published in 1812, 'Vivian,' 'The Absentee,' 'Madame de Fleury,' and 'Émilie de Coulanges.' 'The Absentee' originally formed part of 'Patronage,' where Lord and Lady Tipperary figured as patients of Dr. Percy, and 'Patronage' was to have formed part of the second series of the Tales; but the impatience of the publisher induced her to lay aside 'Patronage,' and (with a change of name) fill the required space in the series with 'The Absentee.' 'Patronage,' published in 1813, had been long upon the stocks. Its history is narrated in her continuation of her father's Memoirs:

'Among others written many years ago, was one called "the History of the Freeman Family." In 1787, my father, to amuse Mrs. Elizabeth Edgeworth, when she was recovering after the birth of one of my brothers, related to us every evening, when we assembled in her room, part of this story, which I believe he invented as he went on. It was found so interesting by his audience, that they regretted much that it should not be preserved, and I in consequence began to

write it from memory. The plan, founded on the story of two families, one making their way in the world by independent efforts, the other by mean arts and by courting the great, was, long afterwards, the groundwork of "Patronage." The character of Lord Oldborough was added, but most of the others remained as my father originally described them: his hero and heroine were in greater difficulties than mine, more in love, and consequently more interesting, and the whole story was infinitely more entertaining. I mention this, because some critics took it for granted that he wrote parts of "Patronage," of which, in truth, he did not write, to the best of my recollection, any single passage; and it is remarkable, that they have ascribed to him all those faults which were exclusively mine: the original design, which was really his, and which I altered, had all that merit of lively action and interest, in which mine has been found deficient.'

It is recorded, in proof of the extent to which 'Clarissa' had fastened on the public mind before the appearance of the concluding volumes, that Richardson received letter after letter passionately entreating him to spare the heroine the crowning misery, or, if that could not be, to reform Lovelace and marry him to his victim. Remonstrances of the same kind appear to have been addressed to the author of 'Patronage' by tender-hearted readers, who could not bear to see Mr. Percy in prison, and were especially hurt by Caroline's refusal to go abroad with Count Altenberg. In the third edition (1815) these alleged blots were removed, although she had scruples touching material changes after the publication of a work. In a note to the 'Contrast,' she had said: 'Those who wish to know the

history of all the wedding clothes of the parties, may have their curiosity gratified by directing a line of inquiry, post paid, to the editor herself.' Referring to the letters of inquiry thus invited, she writes:

"'I have had another odd letter signed by three young ladies, Clarissa Craven, Rachel Biddle, and Eliza Finch, who, after sundry compliments in very pretty language, and with all the appearance of seriousness, beg that I will do them the favour to satisfy the curiosity they feel about the wedding dresses of the Frankland family in the "Contrast." I have answered in a way that will stand for either jest or earnest; I have said that at a sale of Admiral Tipsey's smuggled goods, Mrs. Hungerford bought French cambric muslin wedding gowns for the brides, the collars trimmed in the most becoming manner, as a Monmouth milliner assured me, with Valenciennes lace, from Admiral Tipsey's spoils. I have given all the particulars of the bridegroom's accoutrements, and signed myself the young ladies' "obedient servant and perhaps dupe."'

In May, 1813, the family paid a flying visit to London, and there is an admirable letter from her, filling between seven and eight pages, describing their reception in the best houses. On this and subsequent occasions, she had been accused of an undue leaning to rank and fashion; but the fashionable world of her day included celebrities of all sorts—literary, scientific, artistic, and political—as well as people of birth, fortune, and connection. The most cherished of her friends were those whose names were and are habitually associated with intellectual excellence, refinement, and grace. The Marchioness of Lansdowne, Lady Crewe, Lady Elizabeth Whitbread, Miss Fox, Mrs. Hope (Lady

Beresford), the Misses Berry, Miss Catharine Fanshawe, Lady Spencer, Lady Charlotte Lindsay, the Countess of Charleville, Lydia White, Mrs. Siddons, Lady Milbanke, were of the number. She speaks thus of another, whom she had known from girlhood:

'Charming, amiable, Lady Wellington! as she truly said of herself, she is always "Kitty Pakenham to her friends;" after comparison with crowds of other *beaux-esprits*, fine ladies and fashionable *scramblers* for notoriety, her dignified graceful simplicity rises in our opinion, and we feel it with more conviction of its superiority. She showed us her delightful children. I have been standing in my dressing-gown writing on the top of a chest of drawers, and now I must dress for a breakfast at Lady Davy's, where we are to meet Lord Byron; but I must say that at the third place where we were let in yesterday, Lady Wellington's, we spent by far the most agreeable half-hour of the day.'

The Edgeworths were persons of birth, fortune, and connection, in addition to their literary claims, and simply assumed their natural place when they joined the aristocratic circles, which eagerly courted them. There is nothing, therefore, at all odd, much less reprehensible, in her notices of London life being principally confined to the precincts of May Fair. At all events, they were not confined to fine ladies. Speaking of the same period, Mrs. Edgeworth says: 'One day, coming too late to dinner at Mr. Horner's, we found Dr. Parr very angry at our having delayed and then interrupted dinner; but he ended by giving Maria his blessing.' This is probably the occasion on which Edgeworth boasted before Lord Byron of having put down Parr.

She adds : 'We unfortunately missed seeing Madame d'Arblay, and we left London before the arrival of Madame de Staël.' This falls in with a story printed in Moore's diary :

'In talking of getting into awkward scrapes at dinner tables, Lady Dunmore mentioned a circumstance of the kind in which Rogers was concerned. It was at the time when Madame de Staël was expected in London, and somebody at table (there being a large party) asked when she was likely to arrive. "Not till Miss Edgeworth is gone," replied Rogers : "Madame de Staël would not like two stars shining at the same time." The words were hardly out of his mouth, when he saw a gentleman rise at the other end of the table, and say in a solemn tone : "*Madame la Baronne de Staël est incapable d'une telle bassesse.*" It was Auguste de Staël, her son, whom Rogers had never before seen.'

Two curious traits of children, who have since fully justified the expectations formed of them, were set down by her in 1813 :

'*April* 25, 1813.—I enclose the Butterfly's Ball for Sophy, and a letter to the King written by Dr. (Sir Henry) Holland when six years old : his father found him going with it to the post. (This letter was an offer from Master Holland to raise a regiment. He and some of his little comrades had got a drum and a flag, and used to go through the manual exercise. It was a pity the letter did not reach the King : he would have been delighted with it.)'

'*August*, 1813.—We have just seen a journal by a little boy of eight years old, of a voyage from England to Sicily ; the boy is Lord Mahon's son, Lord Carrington's grandson. It is one of the best journals I ever read, full of facts : exactly the writing of a child, but a very clever child.'

This very clever child became the lateEarl Stanhope.

'Harrington' and 'Ormond,' with 'Thoughts on Bores' (two volumes), was published in May, 1817, with the usual preface by Edgeworth, the last he was destined to write. He died on the 13th of June following: and partly from grief, partly from a complaint in her eyes, Miss Edgeworth wrote hardly any letters for many months. As soon as she was sufficiently recovered from the shock, she set to work to complete her father's Memoirs, which she had to take up and continue from 1782. The whole of the second volume is by her. The work is amusing: many incidents and traits of character are recorded in it, which would have left a chasm in her own biography had they been lost; but it was the least successful of their joint productions, and her part was perceptibly impaired by its being too much a labour of love. It was criticised in the 'Quarterly Review' (Oct. 1820) with extreme bitterness, and in a manner (whatever the intention) particularly adapted to give pain, not only to Maria, but to the entire family; for the four marriages (to which the reviewer tried hard to add a fifth) were made the mark of much moral indignation, real or simulated. Dumont wrote to her: 'If by accident you have not read this infamous article, I should advise you not to read it, and to abandon it to public contempt.' Mrs. Marcet spoke of it as a subject which made her blood boil, and 'roused every feeling of contempt and abhorrence.' Miss Edgeworth wrote at once to her aunt from Paris (Nov. 1820): 'Never lose another night's sleep or another moment's thought on the "Quarterly Review."

I have never read, and never will read it.' She kept her word.

Having finished the Memoirs, she determined to indulge herself in what she had long projected, a visit to Paris with her two young sisters (by the fourth marriage) Fanny and Harriet, and we find them settled in the Place du Palais Bourbon on April 29, 1820.

In one of her letters from Paris, she says: 'I find always when I come to the end of my paper that I have not told you several entertaining things I had treasured up for you. I had a history of a man and woman from Cochin China which must now be squeezed almost to death.' This will be just our case. We shall come to the end of our paper without being able to bring in a tithe of the entertaining, and better than entertaining, things we had noted down: we have more than one history which must be squeezed almost to death or never live at all in our pages. Her letters sparkle with brilliant names, and, in most instances, with fresh anecdotes or reminiscences attached to them. The doors of all the leading houses flew open at her approach, including those of the Fauxbourg St. Germain; for the connection with the Abbé Edgeworth had now become a safe passport to the houses of the ancient *noblesse*. The French always spoke of him as the Abbé de Firmont, a name he had taken on account of the difficulty they found in the *w* and *th*; Edgevatz being their nearest approximation to the sound. At one house, a valet, after Maria had several times repeated 'Edgeworth,' exclaimed, '*Ah, je renonce à ça;*' and, throwing open the door of the salon, announced, '*Madame Maria*

et Mesdemoiselles ses sœurs.' Byron speaks of some Russian or Polish names as 'names that would descend to posterity if posterity could but pronounce them.' Many English names are exposed to the same disadvantage. 'An English traveller (the writer) spent half-an-hour one evening at Tieck's at Dresden, in 1834, vainly endeavouring to teach some German ladies how to pronounce 'Wordsworth.' Few of them got nearer than 'Vudvutt.'

The form of the visiting cards of the party, adopted (she says) after due deliberation, was 'Madame Maria Edgeworth et Mesdemoiselles ses sœurs.' Her sisters were attractive girls, and she had no reason to complain of being over-weighted with them, particularly at Paris, where a guest more or less, even at a dinner party, was never so serious an affair as we are wont to make of it. A notion of their Parisian life may be conveyed in a brief extract:

'We have seen Mademoiselle Mars twice, or thrice rather, in the "Mariage de Figaro" and in the little pieces of "Le Jaloux sans Amour," and "La Jeunesse de Henri Cinq," and admire her exceedingly. In petit comité the other night at the Duchesse d'Escars', a discussion took place between the Duchesse de la Force, Marmont, and Pozzo di Borgo, on the *bon et mauvais ton* of different expressions—*bonne société* is an expression *bourgeoise*—you may say *bonne compagnie* or *la haute société*. "*Voilà des nuances*," as Madame d'Escars said. Such a wonderful jabbering as these grandees made about these small matters. It put me in mind of a conversation in the "World" on good company, which we all used to admire.'

Yet Marmont and Pozzo di Borgo were grandees of no common order. She met all the scientific men of note at Cuvier's, who gave a good instance of Bonaparte's insisting on a decided answer. He asked me, 'Faut-il introduire le sucre de betterave en France?' 'D'abord, Sire, il faut songer à vos colonies.'—'Faut-il avoir le sucre de betterave en France?' 'Mais, Sire, il faut examiner.'—'Bah! je le demanderai à Berthollet.'

She says of Benjamin Constant:

'I do not like him at all: his countenance, voice, manner, and conversation are all disagreeable to me. He is a fair, *whithky*-looking man (*sic*), very near-sighted, with spectacles which seem to pinch his nose. . . . He has been well called the *hêros des brochures*. We sat beside one another, and I think we felt a mutual antipathy. On the other side of me was Royer Collard, suffering with toothache and swelled face; but notwithstanding the distortion of the swelling, the natural expression of his countenance and the strength and sincerity of his soul made their way, and the frankness of his character and the plain superiority of his talents were manifest in five minutes' conversation.'

After leaving Paris they made a short tour in Switzerland, and passed some delightful days at Geneva during what has been termed its Augustan age. Dumont acted as their guide, and one of their first dinners was at Dr. and Mrs. Marcet's, with Dumont, M. and Madame Prévost, M. de la Rive, M. Bonstetten (Gray's friend), and M. de Candolle. During a visit to Coppet, where the Duc and Duchesse de Broglie then were, she is able to exclaim exultingly, 'Here we are

in the very apartments occupied by M. Necker, opening into what is now the library, but what was once that theatre on which Madame de Staël used to act her own Corinne.' . . . 'There is something inexpressibly melancholy, awful, in this house, in these rooms, where the thought continually occurs, Here genius was! here was ambition! here all the great struggles of the passions! here was Madame de Staël!'

'With Madame de Staël and Madame de Broglie (it is added in the Memoir) Maria was particularly happy;' and there are two anecdotes of Madame de Staël which we cannot make up our minds to forego. The first was related by Dumont:

> One day M. Suard, as he entered the saloon of the Hôtel Necker, saw Madame Necker going out of the room, and Mademoiselle Necker standing in a melancholy attitude with tears in her eyes. Guessing that Madame Necker had been lecturing her, Suard went towards her to comfort her, and whispered, "*Une caresse du papa vous dédommagera bien de tout ça.*" She immediately, wiping the tears from her eyes, answered, "*Eh! oui, Monsieur, mon père songe à mon bonheur présent, mamma songe à mon avenir.*" There was more than presence of mind, there was heart and soul and greatness of mind in this answer.'

Miss Edgeworth took down from the Duchess of Wellington's own lips a dialogue between herself and Madame de Staël on a remarkable occasion. The Duchess had purposely avoided making the acquaintance of Madame de Staël in England, not knowing how she might be received by the Bourbons after the Restoration. Finding on her arrival at Paris that Co-

rinne was well received, she invited her to her first assembly. She came, and walking up straight to the Duchess with flashing eyes, began:

'Eh! Madame la Duchesse, vous ne vouliez pas donc faire ma connaissance en Angleterre?

'Non, Madame, je ne le voulais pas.

'Eh! comment, Madame? Pourquoi donc?

'C'est que je vous craignais, Madame.

'Vous me craignez, Madame la Duchesse?

'Non, Madame, je ne vous crains plus.

'Madame de Staël threw her arms round her: Ah, je vous adore.'

The party return to England at the beginning of December 1820, and we next find them at Bowood, where Miss Edgeworth was a frequent and welcome guest. Once when Moore met her there, after recording in his Diary the effect of his singing (which he never omits to record) on Dugald Stewart, he adds: 'Miss Edgeworth, too, was much affected. This is a delightful triumph, to touch the higher spirits.' At a later period, in reference to an invitation to breakfast at Rogers's, he sets down: 'Went, and found Miss Edgeworth, Luttrell, Lord Normanby and Sharpe. Miss Edgeworth, with all her cleverness, anything but agreeable. The moment anyone begins to speak, off she starts too, seldom more than a sentence behind them, and in general contrives to distance every speaker. Neither does what she says, though of course very sensible, at all make up for this over-activity of tongue.' Moore (like Rogers) judged people subjectively, not objectively—from his own feelings, sym-

pathies, or antipathies, not from their qualities, merits, or demerits. We are as certain as if we had been present that Miss Edgeworth put him out, anticipated him in a favourite story, or added a touch of Irish humour which he had let slip. From personal recollection of her manner of conversing, we can state positively that it was utterly remote from eagerness for display or over-activity of tongue. Lord Byron says, her conversation was as quiet as herself. Lockhart, who was fastidious enough in all conscience, was delighted with her; and Scott writes (in 1827):—'It is scarcely possible to say more of this very remarkable person than that she not only completely answered, but exceeded, the expectations which I had formed. I am particularly pleased with the *naïveté* and good-humoured ardour of mind which she unites with such formidable powers of acute observation.'

Fashion, in its best sense, is essentially a discriminating and almost a democratic principle; it unscrupulously overrides birth, fortune, and even fame, for purely personal distinction and agreeability. We have known many a lion and lioness dropped after a short trial. We never knew one retain the coveted position long by mere literary celebrity, much less by restless anxiety for display. The object of the most refined and cultivated society of London and Paris, in their ordinary intercourse, is not to instruct or be instructed, to dazzle or be dazzled, but to please and be pleased. Now, Miss Edgeworth was pre-eminently the fashion, year after year, and she wisely acted on Colton's maxim in 'Lacon': 'In all societies it is advisable to asso-

ciate, if possible, with the highest. In the grand theatre of human life, a *box-ticket* takes you through the house.' During her visit to London in 1822, we find her spending a morning in Newgate with Mrs. Fry, receiving Sir Humphry Davy in the afternoon, taken by Whitbread to the ladies' gallery in the House of Commons in the evening, and finishing with Almack's in its heyday:

'Fanny and Harriet have been with me at that grand exclusive paradise of fashion, Almack's. Observe that the present Duchess of Rutland,[1] who had been a few months away from town and had offended the lady patronesses by not visiting them, could not at her utmost need get a ticket from any one of them, and was kept out, to her amazing mortification. This may give you some idea of the importance attached to admission to Almack's. Kind Mrs. Hope got tickets for us from Lady Gwydir and Lady Cowper (Lady Palmerston); the patronesses can only give tickets to those whom they personally know; on that plea they avoided the Duchess of Rutland's application, she had not visited them,—"they really did not know her Grace," and Lady Cowper swallowed a camel for me, because she did not really know me: I had met her but had never been introduced to her till I saw her at Almack's.

'Fanny and Harriet were beautifully dressed: their heads by Lady Lansdowne's hair-dresser, Trichot; Mrs. Hope lent Harriet a wreath of her own French roses. Fanny was said by many to be, if not the prettiest, the most elegant-looking young woman in the room, and certainly "elegance, birth, and fortune were there assembled," as the newspapers would truly say.'

[1] It was the Duchess of Northumberland, who, not being on the visiting list of a patroness, and not caring to supply the omission, was refused a ticket. This was told the writer by Lady Palmerston.

Lord Londonderry hurries up to talk of 'Castle Rackrent' and Ireland, and introduces them to Lady Londonderry, who invites them to one of her grandest parties. During this visit they become 'very intimate' with Wollaston and Kater, Mr. Warburton, and Dr. and Mrs. Somerville. 'They and Dr. and Mrs. Marcet form the most agreeable as well as scientific society in London.' And then they dine with Lydia White, and become acquainted with Mrs. Siddons, who relates an incident of her career which it was worth going a long way to hear from her own lips:

'She gave us the history of her first acting of Lady Macbeth, and of her resolving, in the sleep scene, to lay down the candlestick, contrary to the precedent of Mrs. Pritchard and all the traditions, before she began to wash her hands and say, "Out, vile spot!" Sheridan knocked violently at her door during the five minutes she had desired to have entirely to herself, to compose her spirits before the play began. He burst in, and prophesied that she would ruin herself for ever if she persevered in this resolution to lay down the candlestick! She persisted, however, in her determination, succeeded, was applauded, and Sheridan begged her pardon. She described well the awe she felt, and the power of the excitement given to her by the sight of Burke, Fox, Sheridan, and Sir Joshua Reynolds in the pit.'

To excuse her constant yearning for the stage after her formal retirement, she was wont to say that nothing in life could equal the excitement caused by that sea of upturned faces in the pit. This story leads naturally to one told by Sir Humphry Davy:

'Sir Humphry repeated to us a remarkable criticism of Bonaparte's on Talma's acting: "You don't play Nero

well; you gesticulate too much; you speak with too much vehemence. A despot does not need all that; he need only pronounce. '*Il sait qu'il se suffit.*'" "And," added Talma, who told this to Sir Humphry, "Bonaparte, as he said this, folded his arms in his well-known manner, and stood as if his attitude expressed the sentiment."'

Before hastening (and we must hasten) to the conclusion, we may mention, in passing, that the third volume of the Memoir contains a long correspondence with Captain Basil Hall, to whom she acted as literary adviser, and an account of an expedition to Connemara with Sir Culling and Lady Smith, which rivals the best Irish sketches in her books. She complained bitterly of the loss of her own literary monitor and coadjutor, and shrank from completing and publishing much which, under his approving eye, she would have given to the world. We have heard on good authority that she left chests full of stories in manuscript which the family have refrained from printing. Her literary labours do not appear to have been very profitable. Lockhart, who acted for her in some of her later arrangements with publishers, states that she never realised for the best of her Irish tales a third of the sum (700*l.*) given for 'Waverley.' Yet 'Waverley' on its first appearance was called a 'Scotch Castle Rack-rent.'[1]

'Harry and Lucy' was begun by her father and his second wife Honora in 1787, to illustrate his notions of practical education. Day offered to assist, and with

[1] *Life of Scott*, vol. iii. p. 124. The *Quarterly Review*, vol. ii. p. 356.

this view wrote 'Sandford and Merton,' which was first designed for a short story to be inserted in 'Harry and Lucy.' Edgeworth, therefore, had some reason for boasting that the public owed 'Sandford and Merton' to him. This is not the first time that a work of lasting reputation has been produced in the same manner. 'Eothen' was begun to assist the author of 'The Crescent and the Cross,' and was at one time intended to appear as a kind of supplement to that work.

There is a letter from Scott to Joanna Baillie, in which he writes:

'I have not the pen of our friend, Miss Edgeworth, who writes all the while she laughs, talks, eats, and drinks, and I believe, though I do not pretend to be so far in the secret, all the time she sleeps too. She has good luck in having a pen which walks at once so unweariedly and so well. I do not, however, quite like her last book on Education ("Harry and Lucy"), considered as a general work. She should have limited the title to "Education in Natural Philosophy," or some such term, for there is no great use in teaching children in general to roof houses or build bridges, which, after all, a carpenter or a mason does a great deal better at 2*s.* 6*d.* a day. . . . Your ordinary Harry should be kept to his grammar, and your Lucy of most common occurrence would be best employed on her sampler, instead of wasting wood and cutting their fingers, which I am convinced they did, though their historian says nothing of it.'

The fault of all her and her father's children's books is that they exact too much from both pupil and teacher, and greatly overestimate the probable or even possible results of their system. They have the fault of Lord

Chesterfield's Letters. They place no bounds to what education can effect. This is more especially the defect of 'Frank'—a work, in other respects, of signal excellence, which well deserves to retain its rank as the first of English boys' books.

Scott's visitors were wont to express the same wonder at the unseen and unaccountable performances of his pen which he expresses of the unwearied walk of hers. The difference between them in this respect was that he got up early and wrote for two or three hours before breakfast, after which he felt at full liberty to amuse himself with his guests. She generally sat down to her writing-desk (a small and plain one made by her father) in the common sitting-room, soon after breakfast and wrote till luncheon, her chief meal; then did some needlework, took a short drive, and wrote for the rest of the afternoon. She probably varied her habits during Scott's visit to Edgeworth-Town.

On May 7th, 1849, being then in her eighty-third year, she writes to Mrs. Richard Buller: 'I am heartily obliged and delighted by your being such a goose, and Richard such a gander, as to be frightened out of your wits at my going up the ladder to take off the top of the clock.' She actually had mounted the ladder, as if emulous of the fate of that old Countess of Desmond, who broke her neck by a fall from a cherry-tree. On the 22nd she was taken suddenly ill with pain in the region of the heart, and expired within a few hours in the arms of her step-mother, the author of the Memoir.

The general character of Miss Edgeworth's productions was so exhaustively discussed in her lifetime, and the traditional estimate of them is so fixed and unanimous, that little remains for us but to take a retrospective glance at their prominent features—to sum up her many merits, and few demerits, as one of the most fertile, popular, and influential English novelists of her age. All are agreed in ranking amongst her qualities—the finest powers of observation: the most penetrating good sense: a high moral tone, consistently maintained; inexhaustible fertility of invention: firmness and delicacy of touch: undeviating rectitude of purpose: varied and accurate knowledge: a clear flexible style: exquisite humour, and extraordinary mastery of pathos. What she wants, what she could not help wanting with her matter-of-fact understanding and practical turn of mind, are poetry, romance, passion, sentiment. In her judgment, the better part of life and conduct is discretion. She has not only no toleration for self-indulgence or criminal weakness: she has no sympathy with lofty, defiant, uncalculating heroism or greatness: she never snatches a grace beyond the reach of prudence: she never arrests us by scenes of melodramatic intensity, or hurries us along breathless by a rapid train of exciting incidents to an artistically prepared catastrophe. Neither does she shine in historic painting; and she would have failed in 'high art' had she aspired to it. Her gaze was too constantly fixed on the surface to admit of much depth or breadth of thought; and she was deficient in the

art of combining more than a limited number of scenes and characters into a plot.

The late Earl of Dudley, a fervent admirer, christened her the Anti-sentimental Novelist; and Madame de Staël was reported to have said, *que Miss Edgeworth était digne de l'enthousiasme, mais qu'elle s'est perdue dans la triste utilité.*' When this was repeated during the visit at Coppet in 1820, the Duchesse de Broglie declared, '*Ma mère n'a jamais dit cela; elle en était incapable.*' For all that, we suspect she did say it. The internal evidence is strong, and the remark is partly founded in truth. Miss Edgeworth is worthy of the highest admiration of the soberer kind: she does not inspire enthusiasm; and she would have been more useful, as well as a thousandfold more attractive, had she thought and written less about utility.

Goethe was wont to maintain that the writer of a work of fiction should take no thought of the moral: that he should keep true to nature and leave the moral to take care of itself. This may be accepted as a sound canon of criticism, subject to a limitation obviously understood. The poet, dramatist, or novelist may safely give the rein to invention under the conscious control of good feeling and good sense. It is not his or her business to vindicate the ways of God to man; much less to warp events in such a manner as to vindicate them. In the case of a story-book for children, there is no great harm in playing Providence in this fashion; for the parent or master can so manage the distribution of rewards and punishments as that good

or bad behaviour shall be speedily followed by the fitting results. Only, when goodness is uniformly productive of extra holidays, pocket-money, and playthings, this is much the same as bribing or coaxing children to be good. But in stories for grown-up people, corresponding results can rarely be brought about without shocking probability, or jarring against the religious faith which looks to the next world to redress the injustice and inequality of this. The folly of trying to fathom the designs of the Infinite is well exposed in the Arabian fable which supplied the story of Parnell's Hermit and is employed (in 'Zadig') with his wonted felicity by Voltaire. The third Epistle of the 'Essay on Man' is a poetical paraphrase of the same argument.

In one of the Popular Tales, entitled 'To-morrow,' the hero is within an ace of ruin by arriving too late to sail with the Chinese Embassy to which he is attached. In travelling, the late Lord Alvanley was almost always behind his time, and, to a laughing remonstrance from a fellow traveller (the writer), replied, 'Why, the fact is, these dilatory habits of mine saved my life. I was about to embark at Trieste for Constantinople: my carriage and servants were on board: I arrived too late: the ship sailed without me and was never heard of again. I am now unpunctual upon principle.'

The same hero (in 'To-morrow') fails in a literary career, for which he is well fitted by knowledge and capacity, because he is always procrastinating either the composition or the publication of his books. But Dr. Johnson seldom began the required paper for the 'Rambler' till there was just time enough to save the

post and not time enough to revise what he had written. Sheridan boasted that he never did to-day what, by any device, he could put off till to-morrow; and we could name more than one successful author, now living, who has sorely tried the patience of an expectant public by his dilatoriness.

Moore one day asked Rogers what he did when people, who wanted his autograph, requested him to sign a sentence with his name. 'Oh, I give them "Ill-gotten wealth never prospers," or, "Evil communications corrupt good manners," or, "Virtue is its own reward."' Luttrell broke in: 'Then the more shame for you to circulate such delusions. Do not the ill-gotten wealth of . . . and . . . prosper? Haven't Tom Duncombe and De Ros, whose communications are all evil, the best manners of any men of our acquaintance? Look at our honest, excellent friend, . . . to whom you, Rogers, lent ten pounds yesterday. Is virtue its own reward in his case? Or, when Pitt spouted Horace and talked of involving himself in his virtue, was he the less eager to be First Lord of the Treasury?'

Now, Miss Edgeworth would not have hesitated a moment to take either one of these maxims as her starting-point; and her father would have written a preface to announce that the moral had been conclusively and satisfactorily worked out. Their mode of working out the moral of 'Virtue is its own reward' would be to picture Virtue richly attired, crowned with laurel, and bearing a cornucopia in her hand.

Do we not all know hundreds who have got on by

patronage? or who have got their first step through a patron, and with occasional help of the same kind have risen steadily and creditably to the top of the tree? The fact is notorious, but unless it can be ignored or kept in the background, it is extremely difficult to demonstrate by a probable succession of events that self-reliance is the only sure or honourable stepping-stone to success. The fictitious narrative will be impaired by the daily observation of the reality, and impaired in exact proportion to the completeness with which it is made to correspond with the premeditated end. Thus, in 'Patronage,' the most indulgent or indifferent reader will be startled by the sudden and simultaneous discomfiture or disgrace of the entire family who have obtained an excellent start by interest. The Dean, the best of the lot, is let off with the lightest sentence. He is married for money to a woman whom he had described the day before as 'an old, ugly, cross, avaricious devil.' This is *his* destiny. The colonel, on foreign service, is out shooting when an important order arrives, sent home under arrest, and cashiered. The diplomatist is detected in a piece of treachery to his official patron, and dismissed. The beauty, 'Georgy,' after missing marriage after marriage, is sent to try her fortune with faded charms to India. A conspiracy for raising money by the sale of places through the instrumentality of forged letters is brought home to the manœuvring mother; and the father is left, another Marius amongst ruins, lamenting over the failure of his system and his schemes.

Scott clears the ground for the desired conclusion

of 'Rob Roy' in the same summary style. Of Sir Hildebrand's four sons, the quarrelsome one is killed in a duel; the sot dies of a fever caused by a drinking bout; the horse-jockey breaks his neck in an attempt to show off a foundered blood-mare; and the fool is killed at Preston fighting bravely for a cause he could never be made to understand. But Scott, far from writing towards a preappointed moral, commonly began without a plan. Miss Edgeworth had entered into a voluntary engagement to connect the downfall of the Falconers with their method of rising, and no logical or necessary connection is made out.

Miss Edgeworth is not satisfied with ordering events: she also frames characters to match. 'Murad the Unlucky' is an example. No man of observation and experience will deny that there are such things as good luck and ill luck: and no man of sense will dissent from Jeremy Taylor's axiom that 'life is like playing at tables: the luck is not in our power, but the playing the game is.' Whether success in the world depends most on prudence or fortune, the point in dispute between the Sultan and the Vizier of the talé is one requiring the utmost delicacy of handling. But Murad is simply a foolish, weak, careless, idle, drunken fellow, who goes out of his way to get into trouble; whilst his brother, Saladin the Lucky, is industry, sobriety, sagacity, firmness and foresight personified. The terms 'lucky' and 'unlucky' have no application to such men. There is no good luck in saving a city from incendiaries by courage and presence of mind:

there is no ill luck in setting fire to a ship by leaving a lighted pipe on a bale of cotton.[1]

In 'Patronage,' again, the rival families are so unequal that they cannot be handicapped for the race. The one has all the good qualities: the other almost all the bad. Reverse the position: encumber the Percys (to borrow a Johnsonian phrase) with any amount of help; leave the Falconers entirely to their own resources; and the sole difference in the result under any easily conceivable circumstances will be, that the Percys will rise more rapidly and the Falconers never rise at all. Indeed, it might have been better for the plot if they never had risen. The sickening pang of hope deferred is the appropriate punishment of placehunting, which ought not to be associated with even temporary success.

'Toil, envy, want, the *patron*, and the jail.'

Boswell states that Johnson first wrote *garret*, 'but after experiencing the uneasiness which Lord Chesterfield's fallacious patronage made him feel, he dismissed the word from the sad group and replaced it by *patron*.'

[1] The late Duke of N. was expatiating on what he termed his ill luck through life; and gave as an illustration that he, a good horseman, should be the one Lord-Lieutenant thrown off his horse in the presence of the Queen amongst the glittering cortége assembled to accompany her Majesty to the first volunteer review, 1860. 'But why, duke, did you suffer yourself to be dragged on the ground in that manner instead of letting go the rein?' 'Oh, my horse, though such a handsome, spirited creature, was so vicious a brute, that I feared he would fly, kicking and biting, amongst the suite.' There it was. Why did he ride a vicious brute on such an occasion?

The intended effect of 'The Lottery' is similarly impaired. The hero gains a 5,000*l.* prize, which unsettles his habits and blights his life. There are numerous instances in which a similar catastrophe has been produced by an unexpected inheritance. Yet not one poor man in a hundred would refuse a fortune, or refrain from putting into the lottery, for fear of being demoralised by wealth. The human mind is so constituted that we all think we can separate the evil from the good, and no experience avails us but our own. Theodore Hook regularly took a ticket in the Austrian lottery in the hope of gaining the castle on the Danube. This was his mirage in the desert, his *château en Espagne*, for years; and a good story might be made out of the shifts to which he was frequently put to raise the money, and his feverish agitation when the time for drawing was at hand.

In stories where Miss Edgeworth clogs herself with a moral, she recals the runner in the German legend who ties his legs together to moderate his pace; and when she keeps pressing considerations of utility on the reader, she may be compared to a host, who, whilst you are admiring the undulating variety of his grounds or enjoying a fine prospect, requests your attention to his mode of draining and fencing, or drags you away to inspect the plan of a projected almshouse or schoolroom.

To a totally different category belong novels like the 'Absentee,' in which the struggles and mortifications of an Irish family of rank in the fine world of London are held up as a warning; or those which, like Joanna Baillie's 'Plays on the Passions,' are composed

for the development of character or the exposure of any given mental malady with its cure. In 'Ennui,' Lord Glenthorn is a dramatic conception of a high order; and the scenes through which he is led, independently of their merit as representations of manners, are admirably adapted to exhibit the peculiar state of feeling contracted by satiety. There are passages in which the young English peer recals Alfieri in phases of mind described in his autobiography; but, as we learn from the letters, Miss Edgeworth cautiously avoided confounding fact with fiction; and it is only in the most ambitious of her portraits that she can be accused of transgressing sound principles of art.

Lord Dudley, who reviewed 'Patronage' in the 'Quarterly Review,' objected that a modern Premier is out of place in a novel. A drawing from the life is of course not permissible, and there are not modern Premiers enough to supply materials for an artistic creation. To conceive one without individual traits would be as difficult as Martinus found it to form an abstract idea of a Lord Mayor without any of the ensigns of his dignity. Miss Edgeworth's Lord Oldborough, excepting two or three slight points of resemblance to Lord Chatham and Lord Grenville, is unlike any premier in *esse* or *posse*; and we agree with Lord Dudley that, powerfully as her Premier is drawn, a great part of our interest is destroyed by constantly reflecting, not only that he did not exist, but that he could not have existed.

The same objection does not hold good against her Chief Justice, for there have been a great many chief

justices. We once heard her say that she had Chief Justice Bushe uppermost in her thoughts during the delineation, which has been questioned on the ground that he did not become Chief Justice till after the publication of the book. The difficulty is cleared away by a letter dated January 14, 1822, in which she says: 'I am rejoiced at Mr. Bushe's promotion. Mrs. Bushe sent to me, through Anne Nangle, a most kind message, alluding to our "Patronage" Chief Justice by *Second Sight*.'

Lord Dudley also hints a doubt whether her English sketches do not suggest that she had taken only an occasional and cursory view of English society. This is not our impression, although she treads more firmly and freely on Irish ground, and the stories of which the scenes are laid in Ireland are most redolent of humour and pathos, more deeply and broadly marked with the stamp of her peculiar genius, than the rest. Lord Jeffrey has reprinted in the corrected edition of his works the opinion which he delivered forty-five years since, that if she had never written anything but the epistle of Larry Brady, the post-boy, to his brother, which forms the conclusion of the 'Absentee,' 'this one letter must have placed her at the very top of our scale, as an observer of character, and a mistress in the simple pathetic.' Without disputing this opinion, we would undertake to produce half-a-dozen passages of equal merit from the same novel, from 'Ormond,' or from 'Ennui.' Lord Jeffrey had already said that she need not be afraid of being excelled by any of her contemporaries in 'that faithful but flattering representation of the spoken

language of persons of wit and politeness—in that light and graceful tone of raillery and argument—and in that gift of sportive but cutting *médisance*, which is sure of success in those circles where success is supposed to be most difficult and desirable.' He appeals to the conversation of Lady Delacour, Lady Dashfort, and Lady Geraldine. If required to specify a complete sketch of an English gentlewoman, he might confidently have pointed to Lady Jane Granville, Mrs. Hungerford, or Mrs. Mortimer.

Speaking of Lord Wellesley in 1825, Moore notes down in his Diary:—'Gave me some very pretty verses of his own to Miss Edgeworth. Showed me some verses of hers to him, strongly laudatory but very bad.' Moore would have thought any verses bad that had not his own exquisite finish; but verse-making was not her vocation, and poetry was not her forte.

Sheridan, struck by the spirit and point of the dialogue in 'Belinda,' recommended her to try her hand at dramatic composition; and two 'comic dramas,' three acts each—'Love and Law,' and 'The Rose, Thistle and Shamrock'—are printed in the collected edition of her works. The unity of action wanting in her novels is equally neglected in these dramas: the *dramatis personæ* are mostly Irish of the lower class, and much of the dialogue is pure brogue. The utmost that can be said for these productions is that, if compressed into one-act farces with Irish Johnson and Power to take parts, they might have had a run; and her name must be added to the long list of novelists, headed by Fielding and Le Sage, who have failed, or

fallen lamentably short of the expected degree of excellence, in the kindred walk of fiction. The dramatic fame of the author of 'Tom Jones' rests on the mock tragedy of 'Tom Thumb;' and so long as the author of 'Gil Blas' was only known as a playwright, no one saw any incongruity in the joke placed by Piron in the mouth of Punchinello:—'Pourquoi *le fol* de temps en temps ne diroit-il pas de bonnes choses, puisque *le sage* (Le Sage) de temps en temps dit de si mauvaises?'

It is from the apex of the pyramid that men calculate its height, and the altitude of genius must be taken where it has attained its culminating point. Let those who wish to appreciate Miss Edgeworth, to derive the greatest amount of refining and elevating enjoyment from her works, skip the prefaces, short as they are—never think of the moral, excellent as it may be—be not over-critical touching the management of the story, but give themselves up to the charm of the dialogue, the scene-painting, the delineation and development of character, the happy blending of pathos and humour with the sobriety of truth. Let them do this, and they will cease to wonder at the proud position awarded to her by the dispassionate judgment of her most eminent contemporaries.

THE COUNTESS HAHN-HAHN.

[FROM THE EDINBURGH REVIEW, JAN. 1844.]

1. *Aus der Gesellschaft, Novelle.* Von (From 'Society,' a Novel, by) IDA, Gräfin (Countess) HAHN-HAHN. 8vo. Berlin: 1838.
2. *Der Rechte* (The Right One). Von IDA, Gräfin HAHN-HAHN. 8vo. Berlin: 1839.
3. *Gräfin Faustine.* Von IDA, Gräfin HAHN-HAHN. 8vo. Berlin: 1840.
4. *Ulrich.* Von IDA, Gräfin HAHN-HAHN. 2 vols. 8vo. Berlin: 1841.
5. *Sigismund Forster.* Von IDA, Gräfin HAHN-HAHN. 8vo. Berlin: 1843.
6. *Cecil.* Von IDA, Gräfin HAHN-HAHN. 2 vols. 8vo. Berlin: 1843.

IT is a remarkable fact, that, out of the fourteen or fifteen thousand living authors of Germany, not one (if we except Tieck, who belongs to the last generation) has obtained anything approaching to an European reputation, or given decided proofs of originality, as a novelist. Rich in historians, fertile in critics, abounding in metaphysicians, and overflowing with thinkers, or gentlemen who think that they are thinking, the whole Confederation has proved, during the last quarter

of a century, utterly unable to produce a prose writer of fiction, who does not turn out, on nice inspection, to be an imitator;—to have belonged, from his or her first conception, to some one of the established schools, historical, metaphysical, or romantic; and kept constantly though unconsciously in mind, some one of the great masters or masterpieces—in nine cases out of ten Scott or Goethe—'Wilhelm Meister' or 'Waverley.' At last, however, we have found one who draws exclusively on her own resources, rises proudly superior to authority, holds on her course in entire disregard or forgetfulness as well of the examples set by her predecessors as of the rules laid down by her contemporaries; and, as may be guessed, is utterly unlike all or any of her countrymen or countrywomen, who, to our knowledge, have hitherto risked themselves in print.

Ida, Countess Hahn-Hahn, is, both by birth and marriage, a member of the Mecklenburg family of Hahn, which begins with a distinguished founder in the dark ages and boasts nine or ten centuries of unsullied nobility. When very young, she married her cousin, but was divorced soon afterwards, on her own application, on the ground of alleged infidelity on the part of the husband. She has lived a good deal in most of the German capitals—mixing chiefly with the class to which she naturally belongs; and she has visited most of the principal countries of Europe, in company with the attached friend to whom 'Faustine' is dedicated. She has one child, a girl of fifteen or sixteen. She herself is about five-and-thirty, or a little more. Two or three years ago she had the misfortune to lose an eye,

through (as she asserts in her 'Reisebriefe') the ignorance or inattention of the operator. The leading events of her life are mentioned, because her style of thought is palpably modified by them; and because her individuality, so to speak, is constantly presented to the mind of the reader, though without the ordinary repelling effect of egotism.

Madame Hahn-Hahn is already the author of six novels, three books of travels, and a little dramatic poem which she is pleased to call an 'Arabesque.' It is our present purpose to consider her exclusively as a novelist; but we must begin by apologising for the term.

Towards the end of her second work, she complains that the word *novelle* was added by the publisher, without her leave, to the title-page of her first. 'As I write no novels, I do not choose to usurp the title, and this book must try to make its way without it. I hope it will not be valued the less on that account, for I do not make the disclaimer out of modesty.' If this be so, we are unable to guess why she disclaims at all; for the only peculiarity which distinguishes such a book as 'Aus der Gesellschaft,' or 'Der Rechte,' from the ordinary run of novels (always excepting their intrinsic merit), is the comparative carelessness of the writer regarding plot, which is hardly a subject of self-congratulation. But we will not quarrel with the lady about a word; there strikes us to be as much action (unity of action, too) and as studied, careful, complete development of character in her best fictions, as in many whose title to be called novels no one ever dreamed of

questioning; but undoubtedly it will be most favourable to her, and equally agreeable to us, to consider them as a series of studies on the feelings; or a succession of characters and situations illustrative of the great problems of domestic life—its pains, pleasures, mutability, discontent—the waywardness of the affections, the inconstancy of the imagination, the insufficiency of all things human to satisfy the eternal cravings of the heart. Considered in this point of view, it would be difficult to form an undue estimate of their merit; so well chosen, and at the same time so varied, are both scenes and actors. In one of her single volume books, there are seldom less than four or five sets of people making each other happy or miserable, yet no two of them bring about the proposed result in the same manner. As for heroes and heroines, she can hardly be said to have any; and she has so little turn for melodramatic display, that it is only when the story is drawing to a conclusion, and some show of unity is imperatively required, that she places her men and women in marked contrast, or attempts to throw them into groups. They talk more than they act, and feel more than they talk; for her strength consists in tracing the influence of time, place, and circumstance upon the heart. She delights to combat the notion that the affections can be subjected to the will, and is never more at home than when expounding the *rationale* of change, or suggesting excuses for inconstancy.

The scenes are laid in the higher orders of society, and almost all her characters, with the exception of a stray artist or so, are taken from them. We have heard

her blamed on this account, and accused of undue fastidiousness; but there strikes us to be no foundation for the charge. It was quite natural that she should take the materials immediately within her reach, especially when these were best adapted to her main purpose—the frank and full exposure of the moral maladies peculiar to persons of her own rank, with a view to the patient endurance of them; for she holds out small prospect of a cure. She moves too easily and habitually amongst her '*Hoch-Wohlgebornen*' (High-Wellborn) to produce even a momentary impression resembling that left by the authors of our 'silver-fork' school; and although she is evidently attached to aristocratical institutions, we have discovered no traces of what can fairly be designated as illiberality. The native nobility of mind is never refused a place alongside of the conventional nobility of birth; genius is mentioned as the universal leveller: knowledge, refinement, and self-respect, as the best titles to consideration in society. In fact, her tone and manner, as well as her selection and treatment of subjects, are precisely those of a high-bred gentlewoman; and it is by no means an insignificant, though incidental, recommendation of her books, that we collect from them a sufficient knowledge of the habits, tastes, feelings, and opinions of the German nobility and gentry, conveyed in the mode least open to suspicion—*i.e.* unconsciously. We have a theory, that no one who enters a country for the express purpose of describing it, sees things in their proper natural relation to each other; and as most of the authors of what are called 'fashionable novels' never

get beyond the precincts, they are still more liable to fall into exaggerations and mistakes than travellers.

Another characteristic of this writer is, that she never wanders beyond the circle of private life into questions of government or legislation. This alone strikingly, and in our opinion not disadvantageously, distinguishes her from a writer who has not unfrequently been named with her. Madame Hahn-Hahn has been called the 'George Sand' of Germany; and that there are a few superficial points of analogy between her and Madame Dudevant, is undeniable. Both have written novels and travels; both have been unlucky in marriage: but here the parallel must stop. When we open their books and look a little below the surface, we find ample materials for contrast, and none whatever for comparison.

To bring the two within the same category, we must begin by laying entirely out of the account Madame Dudevant's later productions, those of the mystical religious character; in many of which, mixed up with much that is obscure, wild, or faulty, it is impossible to help recognising a wonderful grasp of thought, combined with poetic power of a very high order. The parallel, if there is to be one, must rest on such books as 'Indiana,' 'Jacques,' and 'Lelia.' Now these are, for the most part, open or covert attacks on laws, rules, and observances of all sorts. When people are unhappy, it is rarely, according to her, that they have themselves to thank for it. It is some unequal law which depresses the poor—some artificial code of manners and morals which embarrasses the rich. All our suffering proceeds

from causes which a more enlightened public opinion would remove; and even when individual hearts, minds, and dispositions are in fault, their aberrations are attributed to the corruptions or false notions of society.

We bear willing testimony to the comprehensive views, the warm sympathies, the hatred of wrong, the thirst for truth, which distinguish all Madame Dudevant's books: nor are we prepared to say that she is an immoral writer. Her ends are noble, though the means may be ill chosen; she raises and elevates, if she occasionally misleads; and she never loses sight of the best foundation of all morals—the importance of self-sacrifice, the necessity of mutual forbearance, the healing, soothing, peace-promoting virtue of charity. Still it is a dangerous doctrine to propound, that much of what the world calls crime may be nothing more than mistake or misfortune; and though prolonged and patient suffering exercises a strengthening, purifying effect upon the soul, it requires more of the esoteric philosophy than falls to the lot of many, to appreciate Lelia's meaning, when she silences her young admirer's scruples regarding her friend Trenmor by the remark—'*Ecoutez, jeune homme, il a subi cinq ans de travaux forcés.*'

There is nothing at all resembling this in Madame Hahn-Hahn. Her motto rather seems to be:

> 'How small, of all that human hearts endure,
> That part which laws or kings can cause or cure.'

She feels as keenly as any man or woman of genius that ever lived, the frequent injustice of opinion; and at rare intervals something like a despairing cry breaks

from her, at the wearing, wasting monotony of life. But her settled conviction is, that the world is a place of trial, an arena on which the best and wisest are playing at cross-purposes; man never is, but always to be, blest.[1] In youth we are unhappy, because we cannot anticipate the future; in more advanced age, because we cannot renovate the past; and it is a part of the inscrutable design of Providence, that reality should fall short of hope, and enjoyment end in satiety. She does not say that our hearts are desperately wicked, but she says that they are desperately fickle; instead of telling us to obey their capricious impulses, she expressly tells us to bridle them; and she inculcates the due discharge of the domestic duties as the best sedative for restlessness. Even the weak wavering Ulrich, the slave of passion, is not allowed the ordinary indulgence of attributing his loss of peace to the laws of marriage or the regulations of society.

'You have told me (says Ulrich, in a letter to a friend) that you have been acquainted with passion, but tell me, have you pursued it—or rather, has it pursued you—to the complete disorganisation or paralysis of your being? Tell me, is it my unlucky peculiarity, or that of all men of sensibility, to be encircled and crushed by that boa? There are moments when I rise against myself, when I would fain shake off, at any cost, a yoke which my weakness has imposed upon me; for others shake it off. I am now in such a moment. My whole course of conduct appears to me unworthy and unmanly. I ask myself: Are there, then, no honours and duties, no merits and distinctions, no friends,

[1] 'The world is a schoolroom, not a playground' (*Mrs. Piozzi*). 'To those who think, life is a comedy; to those who feel, a tragedy' (*Walpole*).

male or female, in the world, with whom life may be passed suitably, reasonably, and, so to speak, right pleasantly? Have I not my beautiful Malans on the beautiful Rhine, sufficient for all the wants of domestic, as well as all the refinements of social life, full of recollections of my father, who loved and adorned it, because he had there spent many a happy year with my mother. Am I not myself married to a pretty, amiable woman, who requires nothing but a little attention on my part to become the best of wives and the tenderest of mothers? Is it not inconceivable perversity, or criminal blindness, to possess so many elements of happiness, and not to be able so to order and govern them as to mould them into a firm, sure, complete happiness? Ought I not to collect myself once for all? take my heart to task, call in my wishes from their restless aimless wanderings, change my unattainable dreams of bliss for the attainable peaceful enjoyments of reality, and instantly return from the plains of the Don to the Rheingau and my home? Home, my friend—is not that a sweet name for a sweeter thing? Does not the foundation and keystone of all human exertion lie within the narrow limits of domesticity—in its kindly, cordial, contented, and yet widely-branching influence? Every other loosens the bonds between us and our fellows, because it isolates us in our egotism: let the love of glory, the thirst of knowledge, the pursuit of art, or even the loftiest ambition, boast as they may of their philanthropy, of their brotherhood with the human race, and their exertions in its cause. As for all those theoretical systems of philanthropy, which profess to establish amity with Hottentots and Esquimaux, and bring about cordiality between nations, while the founder hates and despises the individual men in his immediate neighbourhood, and harbours envy and jealousy within his own breast, I make no great account of them. The practical one of St. Vincent de Paul, who took off the chains of the galley slaves, and bore them in their stead—that I can conceive, and the Saint was lucky in having hit

upon it. I possess no such capability of self-sacrifice, and very few do. Since, however, no thorough improvement of character is possible, unless our charity and compassion, our patience and readiness for self-sacrifice, are tried,—for this very reason a circle has been marked out for us, in which we may practise them for our own happiness, and, therefore, willingly and easily; namely, the family circle. Yes, God has ordered man's destiny easily and pleasingly! he places each of us before the entrance of a magic circle, full of such power and such beauty that egotism itself loses its ugly form within it, since it is there changed into a feeling which belongs to the *mine*, and no longer to the *I*. There is full contentment; reward in the sacrifice; blessing for the exertion; consolation hand-in-hand with care, and refreshment alongside of labour. Instead, now, of taking possession of this happiness without more ado, we look round, and consider whom we shall introduce into our paradise, and there may be one amongst ten thousand who does not demand from God an Eve after his own special ordering. See now, this demand thrusts us far away from the portal. Everything assumes a different form; the kindly circle is changed into a prison, where intolerable burdens and miseries await us—into a rowing bench, on which two wretches are chained down, whose sufferings are turned into downright martyrdom by their compelled proximity. And all this because we never, or too late, meet with the individual woman whom we should wish to make our wife! Had God given us nothing but sound sense and understanding, this would never come to pass; and every sensible, pretty woman would answer our expectations, and satisfy us. But, to our sorrow, we have also a heart; and that is not so easily satisfied. It is too tender, or too wilful—enough, it despises the simple domestic fare, and hungers for ambrosia. In this everlasting hunger it grows faint. Faintness of heart paralyses the whole machinery of existence. To this am I come. Do you

understand this? I do not mean, have you thought about it, but have you lived it?'

A woman, a weak one too, suffering from the same malady, writes thus:

'What states of mind and soul I have lived through! with what demons I have wrestled; what a languishing thirst for happiness at first, and what an aversion for the joys of the world at last came over me. Oh, there are no words for it! Yet who among us has not wrestled and suffered? who among us has not gone through the illusion-destroying, spirit-crushing process? who among us has not seen his altars tottering, and his idol tumbling from its throne? But, somewhere or other, there is a green oasis for us all! If it does not bloom in the present, it dawns in the future, or smiles mournfully from the past. He who is saddened by his recollections, throws himself boldly into the arms of hope or into the bewitching enjoyment of the moment; he who suffers from the world, takes refuge in a loving heart or in his own; he who cannot luxuriate in feeling, seeks relief in action; he who cannot find a resting point that satisfies him in things external, has a wide unbounded domain bestowed upon him by thought. Existence is an ever-blooming Eden for none; for most, it is a soil which they must laboriously build upon, a soil scattered over with wastes and rocks; yet the dry waste is sprinkled with sweet flowers, moss and ivy are entwined about the rock, and the fir-tree springs from its crevices. Vegetation plants itself everywhere, and developes life—*except in drift-sand.*'

As for our minor miseries, these also depend much upon ourselves; and a habit of self-examination, she thinks, will effectually remove most of them. When you are fretful, uneasy, desponding, without any as-

signable cause—or inclined to think yourself neglected by your friends, pause a moment and consider whether they have not as much reason to complain of you as you of them; whether you are not suffering from some chronic malady, moral or physical; whether you are not approximating to the state of Louis XIV. at that period of his life when Madame Maintenon complained, that she had to amuse a king who was no longer *amusable.*

Again, according to Madame Hahn-Hahn's theory, although it may not be in everyone's power to be contented or constant, it is in everyone's power to be true; and she has no mercy for any sort of trifling, mental sophistication, or deceit:

> 'This, above all, to thine own self be true;
> And it must follow, as the light the day,
> Thou canst not then be false to any man.'

Her severity in this respect may be estimated from a short dialogue between the young artist Polydor and the Countess Schönholm, his patroness, in 'Aus der Gesellschaft:'

'"But you will write to me often and much, won't you?"

'"That is as it may be: I can promise nothing beforehand, because I do not know whether I shall be able to keep my word."

'"But you must know what you will do?"

'"No, for I do not know what may happen to me."

'"It is, therefore, quite possible for you to forget me altogether in a new object or a new idea?"

'"No; but you may certainly be thrown into the background."

'"Countess, you are dreadfully candid."

'"If you would but speak the truth, you feel exactly the same."

'"Possibly; but I do not say it to you."

'"I, however, say it to you designedly, that you might not, young as you are, imagine yourself to be dearer to me than you are."

'"Countess, why do you say such hard things to me?"

'"Because you are a man, my poor Polydor; consequently a little vain and confident. In every relation between men and women, I deem it best for both sides to know, as precisely and clearly as possible, what they are to one another; otherwise misunderstandings capable of giving great pain may easily occur."'

We have said that allowances are made for passion; but we must limit the proposition. The indulgence extends no further than to the unconscious growth or progress of feeling: the moment ladies or gentlemen become aware of a guilty wish or forbidden liking, they must fly. No paltering with conscience, no tampering with duty, no references to Plato or his creed; judgment of instant separation is pronounced without appeal. Otto (in 'Aus der Gesellschaft') gives up Ilda. Margaret (in 'Ulrich') flies Ulrich. Olden (in 'Der Rechte') quits Vincenza for ever at her bidding. Renata (in 'Cecil'), nobly resists temptation. In the few instances in which the bounds of duty are transgressed, the transgression is not defended; and the character (Faustine, for example) is described as an exceptionable one.

It should be added, that Madame Hahn-Hahn's respect for inconstancy originates in a conviction that

the highest natures—generally the most imaginative and impressible—are incapacitated, by the law of their being, from resting satisfied with what they possess; or resisting the attractions of any new and unknown object, if it happens to bear a closer resemblance to the ideal image of grace and beauty which is ever moving before them with a glory round its head. Moreover, their minds and hearts are constantly advancing; and the same amount of excellence, or the same sort of sympathy will no more suffice for them in their more advanced stages, than the pursuits of boyhood will satisfy the man. Still, this tendency does not prevent them from throwing themselves, heart and soul, into their first grand passion; and an adorer, after Madame Hahn-Hahn's own heart, would be more likely to be thought too devoted than the contrary. The required sentiment, seasoned with a spice of Wertherism, is embodied in some spirited verses printed in her first novel,[1] and we have therefore attempted a translation of them. It is as literal as we can make it; but it is only by a lucky chance that a succession of simple heartfelt expressions or idiomatic felicities in one language are ever capable of exact representation in another.

'If you'll be my own,
Then list to me now,
My lot shall be shown
Clear as such will allow.
True told you shall hear it—
Dark, light, as may be—
And if you can't bear it,
You do not love me.

[1] *Aus der Gesellschaft*, p. 189.

'Thorn-tangled and wild,
And o'er rocks is my path;
Oh! am I the child
Of God's favour or wrath?
At times I feel riven—
So shatter'd, so drear—
And then, as if heaven
Were opening to cheer.

'The lark trills her note
Unseen and on high;
The eagle will float
Alone in the sky.
Just so is my being;
I pour out my lay
Unseen and unseeing,
And hover, as 'they.

'Right up tow'rds the sun
I soar, tempest-tost;
And bliss has been won
Where peace has been lost.
Yet I grow calm, and care
Dies away at its birth,
As I bathe in the air
That's untainted by earth.

'Let the war-cries of life
Ring loud as they will,
Through the thick of the strife,
You must follow me still.
The shame you must bear,
Ay, make it your own;
And the crown you must wear
As if born to a throne.

'If your soul is thus steel'd,
Self-sustained, self-possess'd,
Unable to yield,
And yet able to rest;
Come to me—no shrinking—
I'll live on for you—
But if you stay thinking
One moment—Adieu.'

We have gradually wandered from our parallel; but we must return to it, if only to mention one more difference, the most decided of the whole. Some gifted and many commonplace women, feeling or thinking themselves fitted for a wider field of exertion than is ordinarily held compatible with the appropriate virtues of their sex, have murmured, or railed in good set terms, at the alleged injustice of the restraints imposed on it; and Madame Dudevant, not satisfied with assuming a masculine name, and displaying (it must be owned) a masculine strength of understanding, has occasionally adopted the garb, together with a few of the distinctive habits, of the stronger sex. The *statuette* by which she is best known throughout Europe, represents her standing in an easy, independent attitude, attired in pantaloons and a frock coat. Madame Hahn-Hahn, on the contrary, is thoroughly feminine in all her tastes, habits, feelings, and modes of thought—in her weakness as well as in her strength; nor does she appear to have made up her mind that women are qualified to contend for the greater prizes in art, science, and philosophy. For example:

'"Without pleasure in that which has been undertaken in good earnest, without devotion to it, satisfaction in it, triumph with it—nothing great was ever yet accomplished; and what is the quintessence of these feelings except inspiration? What else is the pulse of their life? Inspiration is the electric shock which runs through the chain of existence; and history shows that it is only received by men."

'"Only by men?" interrupted Faustine—"and the prophetesses of the Hebrews! and the Roman matrons who

laughed at death? and the priestesses of the Germanic tribes! and the heroines of Saragossa."

'"I except the mere impulse. When a woman's heart is touched, when it is moved by love—be it for an individual, for her country, or for her God—then the electric spark is communicated, and the fire of inspiration flames up. But even then, woman desires no more than to suffer and die for what she loves. No woman was ever excited to the creating, controlling, world-lifting point: no, never; that is, never by inspiration. By intrigue, by caprice—likely enough; she amuses herself with these occasionally. But it never yet entered the mind of woman to make her lover immortal, like Petrarch's Laura and Dante's Beatrice. They do not even master art; much less science.' That woman remains to be born who is capable of interesting herself for an abstract idea, to the extent of enduring chains and torture for its sake, like Galileo with his *e pur si muove.* We cannot so much as form a notion of a female Socrates."' (*Faustine*, p. 149.)

There is no getting over the fact that no woman has ever attained the highest rank in any branch of art, science, or literature;—not even in music or painting, where neither masculine education nor physical strength can be deemed essential. There are no female Raphaels or Michael Angelos; no female Handels, Beethovens, or Mozarts. Madame Hahn-Hahn does not even maintain the superiority of her sex in matters of the heart.

'"Under ordinary circumstances," said Faustine, "we may be superior to men in tact and fineness of perception; but when a man loves—and this happens oftener than women are willing to allow—he enfolds the beloved one like a sensitive plant, and feels sooner, stronger, every dawning

emotion, every shade of feeling, every growing thorn of disagreement, every swelling bud of happiness. But then he must love in good earnest"' (p. 177).

Enough has been said to distinguish Madame Hahn-Hahn from her celebrated contemporary; and the course of the parallel has naturally led us to state the leading qualities of her style. We may now, therefore, proceed to a more detailed examination of her books; but it is only fair to say, that their great charm consists in the succession of skilful touches by which characters are developed, and in the incidental topics or allusions by which attention is kept up. She seems to have followed the advice given by Mr. Merryman to the poet in the prologue to 'Faust.' 'Do but grasp into the thick of human life! Everyone lives it—to not many is it known—and seize it where you will, it is interesting.' She scatters about so many traits of sensibility, so many poetic fancies, so much suggestive speculation on the subjects which come home to every one who has mixed in society; that, though few of them, taken individually, may be very profound or original, a highly pleasing impression is produced—somewhat resembling that (to borrow one of her own similes) produced by the Milky Way upon the eye. 'The collective mass forms a luminous streak, every single minute point of which is a star; but no Orion, no Sirius, overpoweringly attracts the view.' She is just the sort of writer who must be read, and read carefully by a qualified reader, to be appreciated.

'Gräfin Faustine,' the third on our list, is the book in which Madame Hahn-Hahn first put forth her full

strength, and displayed her peculiar qualities. It is marked by more unity of purpose and compactness of plot, than 'Aus der Gesellschaft' or 'Der Rechte;' which, short as they are, are more than half made up of episodical narratives or detached scenes. It has also been said, and is currently believed, that 'Gräfin Faustine,' and Ida, Gräfin Hahn-Hahn, are one and the same person.

The opening scene is laid at Dresden, on the terrace overlooking the river, where several young men are lounging and chatting, one fine afternoon in June. It was too early for the female promenaders.

'It was consequently the more remarkable that a woman, apparently belonging to the higher class, was seated on a bench, with her back towards the pavilion, undisturbed by the talking of the men, or the noise of the children. But it struck no one. She must therefore be somebody whom every one knew and no one minded. She was sketching diligently. A servant stood statue-like by her side, holding a parasol, so that neither a dazzling ray of light, nor the quivering shade of the leaves, might fall on the hand, eye, or paper, of his lady. Her large dark eye flew with keen quick glances hither and thither between the drawing and the landscape; and the delicate hand, relieved from the glove for the sake of greater fineness of touch, and careless of exposure to the air, skilfully followed the glance. She was completely buried in her occupation.'

The group of loungers were joined by one of their companions, and a stranger, Count Mario Mengen, who had just been appointed Secretary of Embassy at Dresden—a distinguished-looking man in the prime of life.

'"Why, there is actually the Countess Faustine sketching!" suddenly exclaimed the new comer, Feldern.

'"But where is Andlau, then?" said another: "she has been nearly an hour here alone. I wonder that he consents to it."

'"That he endures it!" exclaimed another.

'"Come, come," said the ever kind Feldern, "they are not chained to one another."

'"Don't you believe, Feldern, that they are privately married?"

'"No: for they might be openly married, if they chose."

Whilst the conversation was proceeding, the lady rose and moved slowly away, greeting the men of her acquaintance with the air of a queen as she went by.

'"Who is the lady?" inquired Count Mengen, eagerly.

'"The very Countess Faustine we were speaking about."

'"A stranger?"

'"Yes, but settled here some years."

'"Married?"

'"Has been"—"Perhaps"—"Not known"—"A widow"—resounded on all sides.

'Mengen looked round. "You are joking."

'"Honour bright! we are speaking the simple truth."

'"The truest and simplest," said Feldern, "is, notwithstanding, when we say that Countess Faustine Obernau is a widow."'

The scene changes to Faustine's house, where Baron Andlau is discovered, seated on an ottoman, in a fever of impatience for her return.

'"Why does she not come?" said he to himself: "has anything happened to her? Why did I not go with her? my headache would not have been worse. Why, above all,

did I let her go out at this hour of the day!" He took his hat, and was going out to meet her, when he heard her step on the staircase. He sprang up and opened the door for her. The darkened room seemed to grow light as she entered. Faustine threw her bonnet on one table, her drawing-book on another, herself on a sofa, and exclaimed—

'"My dear Anastasius, that will be a charming sketch! but I am tired—tired to death."

'"Why do you over-exert yourself so? Is it absolutely necessary that the sketch should have so hot a sun-glare?"

'"Absolutely necessary!" said she. "Besides, I have already rested, and this very evening you must go over to Neustadt with me. I must learn exactly how the river and the churches look by moonlight."'

He hands her a letter containing an invitation from her sister-in-law:

'"Well," said Faustine, "a day or two sooner or later can't matter to you. Let us start the day after to-morrow. Together as far as Coburg; then you to Kissingen, I to Oberwalldorf; at the beginning of July I will join you—and then for Belgium."

'Andlau made no objection. He was content with every thing that was agreeable to her, and as she commonly cared for nothing and nobody in the world but him, this must be reckoned an extraordinary merit in him; for most people are most dissatisfied when the greatest interest is taken in them. She had sat down beside him on the ottoman. He touched her forehead lightly with his lips, and looked down upon her with an indescribable expression of tenderness, devotion, and joy. Faustine alone had ever seen him smile from an inward sense of pleasure; for to her he was everything she wanted, and at every moment when she wanted him—father or friend, teacher or lover, encouraging or warning, watching over or caressing—and she leant upon him as her visible providence.

Her discursive fancy was kept within limits by his clearness —her restless excitability by his calmness. "As those slaves in the East," she would say laughingly, "wear, as a sign of their condition, only a little gold chain upon the wrist, which looks like an ornament; just so is your love an ornament, but still a chain."

'"Which you are obliged to carry to prevent your being blown about by all the winds of heaven," replied Andlau.

'"And to be sure I deserve no better; for I have a genuine slave nature, and love most where I am most tyrannised over."'

With every wish to be sparing of our extracts, we are obliged to bear in mind that a train must be laid where an effect is to be produced: it is essential that the characters and position of Andlau and Faustine should be understood; and a few descriptive touches are still necessary.

'Almost all women were fond of Faustine, for she never came into competition with them. She grudged them neither their triumphs, nor their fine clothes, nor their adorers, and was content to have none of these. True, she threw the most beautiful and brilliant women into the shade, yet in such a manner that it was not felt. The beautiful said—"She has a great deal of mind, but she is certainly not handsome." The clever—"She has not much sense, but she is very lovely." None of them compared themselves with her, just as fine garden flowers would probably not like to be compared to a wild Alpine plant. A savage said once, on seeing a picture of an angel, "He is of my race." Civilised people no longer possess this divine instinct.'

Some may think this figure overwrought, but let it not be condemned hastily. Does it not gracefully

indicate the too prevalent inclination in society to put down or repudiate what exceeds the ordinary measure, or makes the least claim, however well-founded, to superiority? When the claim has been made good, the tone is inviting enough, but the first impulse is to repel. It is something to fix the attention of contemporaries—to say nothing of the chances with posterity—and one would think that ordinary people would gladly claim kindred with genius; yet, not long since, it was by no means unusual to hear a commonplace, mere walking talking gentleman, sneeringly inform the company that he was not *literary*—as if any human being could fancy that he was.

'Pindar's fine remark,' says Coleridge, 'respecting the different effects of music on different characters, holds equally true of genius; as many as are not delighted by it, are disturbed, perplexed, irritated.' Goethe makes the same complaint in his 'Farbenlehre:' 'A noble deed is attributed to selfishness, an heroic action to vanity, an undeniable poetic production to a state of delirium: nay, what is still stranger, everything of the highest excellence that comes forth—everything most worthy of remark that occurs, is, so long as it is barely possible, denied.'

The ordinary run of men, it is added, did not take to her: she was not sufficiently tolerant of their complimentary commonplaces, or indulgent to their self-love.

'Elderly men liked her best; probably because she was more friendly towards them—partly out of respect for age, partly because she maintained that she ran less danger—not

of falling in love—but of being suspected of doing so, which might prove inconvenient and annoying. She was without fortune, without consideration, without connections; yet such was the influence of her personal qualities, that the world silently recognised her connection with Baron Andlau as a legal one, and, to excuse itself for this indulgence, supposed a private marriage.'

This kind of toleration is not unusual in Germany—not merely in Vienna, where a certain degree of laxity has always existed, but in Berlin, where the standard of propriety is more rigidly maintained.

They separate, and Faustine goes to her sister's, where nothing remarkable occurs, expect that a wild young man, Clement Wallsdorf, a connection of the family, falls desperately in love with her, despite of marked discouragement. On her return, she rushes to meet Andlau with an eagerness which makes him tremble.

'She was bewitchingly beautiful in her storms of sensibility, and indeed all human beings are most beautiful when they are in their peculiar element; but he loved her so much, that he felt less pleasure in seeing her in her full beauty, than fear lest the frequent recurrence of such moments should consume the sources of life.

'"But why are you weeping, Ini?" asked Andlau; "before you were with me you had something like a reason—but now——?"

'"Pedant?" exclaimed she, "must I then be happy by rule? When rejoicings, kissing, caresses, are not enough, tears and fault-finding must take their turn."'

Andlau's mother dies, and another separation becomes necessary. They part as usual with vows of eternal constancy:

'"Now, let the most important word be the last. Ini—Forget me not."

'"That is a worn-out jest, Anastasius."

'"No jest, Ini. You do not know yet how you can forget all."

'"Oh, all, dearest—all; but not you!" She flung her arms round him in a burst of agony, and when he tore himself away, and the door closed upon him, she felt that her guardian angel had abandoned her; she sank upon one knee, exclaiming—"He is gone! he is gone! Oh, my God, abide with me now!"'

His return is postponed from week to week, and she remains for nearly two months in a state of loneliness, going out very seldom, and receiving few visitors. At the end of this time, her young admirer, Clement, arrives at Dresden; and she begins to cultivate society in order to avoid a frequent *tête-à-tête* with him. At the house of a friend she becomes acquainted with Count Mario Mengen, the stranger who had been so much struck by her on the terrace. He is clever, well-informed, and endowed with a certain independence of thought and bearing, which harmonises with her own. His conversation soon becomes her chief resource; the day is incomplete without him, and Andlau's absence is less painfully felt.

The passages in which the growth of their mutual liking is traced, are amongst the best in the book; but we must hasten to the period when it can no longer remain a secret to either of them. On one occasion Mengen found her surrounded with maps of the East. He asked her what she was studying.

'"My journey to the East." She explained her plan, and asked whether he would be of the party. He joyfully assented; and she proceeded to call up all the historical and poetical associations which throw so great a charm on this journey. Suddenly she said, "One of Andlau's friends has just been appointed Consul at Alexandria. He wrote me so to-day, and this friend is now the foundation-stone of my pyramid of hope."

'"As soon as the Baron von Andlau is with you, I shall be *de trop*," said Mengen very coldly, "and I fancy you would then willingly dispense with me."

'"Why should you deprive yourself of the pleasure?" she inquired kindly; "and can I then ever be surrounded by too many friends?"

'"Ah, you make me your slave—not your friend."

'"If I do so, you are right to break loose from me; but I do it unconsciously."

. . . . .

'"But go, Count Mengen—go; if your liberty is infringed by me, I do not keep you."

'"Unconsciously, as you said yourself."

'"Well, if you won't go, you must not complain. You may break your chains, but you must not rebel against them."'

As if from a presentiment that his strength of mind would soon be put to the proof, she, half in earnest, requires him to take a vow that, come what may, he will never be wanting to himself.

'"Now then," said Mengen, exerting himself to keep up the tone of feeling; "now, you must give me something which will constantly remind me of it, which will never leave me."

'"That is but fair," said she; "Duke Christian of Bruns-

wick constantly wore a glove of Elizabeth of the Palatinate in his helmet. My yellow glove would have an excellent effect in your black hat."

'Mario rose, and walked to her writing-table. On it stood a small Etruscan vase, containing rings and seals. He brought it to her. She glanced over the contents, and at length selected a plain gold ring, with a single large pearl, and the device: *Qui me cherche, me trouve.* "Is this ring to your liking?"

'By way of reply, Mengen held out his hand, and begged her to place the ring on the ring finger. She was about to comply, when she suddenly bethought herself, and said slowly, "No, that finger will at some future time wear another ring, to which mine must give place. Grant it a place from which it can never be expelled. No objections!" she exclaimed, with animation. "I am wilful! I will have a place to myself, be it ever so small—I will have my own place, or none at all. It is for you to choose."

'"It is for you to command," replied Mario; "I meant only, that you make every place your own."

'"Oh yes, if I take my stand on one which never brings me into collision with the claims of the world. See, the ring fits your little finger exactly:" and she placed it there.

'At the conclusion of this interview, Mario was so happy that he had quite forgotten how cast down he was at the commencement. To Faustine, however, as soon as he went away, the question suggested itself—whether Andlau would be quite satisfied with this gift of the ring. In his presence she would certainly have given it, and have been sure of his consent. But in his absence? The resolution to write to him a full account of it the next morning, quieted her.'

She is interrupted, and forgets to write; yet Madame Hahn-Hahn labours hard to persuade us that there was no coquetry, no selfishness, no intentional trifling with

the feelings of others, in what she did. It was their fault or misfortune if their paths crossed, or their destiny became blended with hers.

'"I really cannot bear to live so lonely, and if Mengen were not here!—Thank God, he is." Whether this delight in his presence would outlast Andlau's return—whether Mario would not have reason to complain, if that were not the case—never so much as occurred to her. She thought she had a right to rejoice with all her soul in this attractive object. She saw no danger in this. It would be doing her injustice to call this levity, though there was that in her nature which produces levity. But life was to her a problem how to mould herself to the greatest possible perfection; and every incident was a fresh stroke of the chisel to assist in freeing the divine image from the rough mass of rock. Whatever fell in her way, she accepted as sent from on high to be worked up for her improvement, without doing wrong to anyone. But what thread of existence is drawn out in so lonely a direction, that no other gets entangled or interwoven with it.'

A consciousness of her critical position begins at last to break upon her. Would Andlau and Mengen agree? Would it be possible for her to keep well with both of them? She felt that it would not. She felt that her only safe and honest course was, to tell Mengen at once the exact nature of her connection with Andlau; but this would drive him from her, and she could not make up her mind to such a sacrifice. Whilst she is still wavering, Mengen is obliged to leave Dresden. A party of her friends are with her on the last evening they are to pass together; but he stays them all out.

'At last she was alone with Mario. Silent, with folded arms, he stood before her for a time, for his feelings stifled his words. She stood up, placed both hands, clasped together, on his arm. "Till our next meeting, friend."

'"Can I part from you thus?" inquired he in the same low tone, and clasped her hands in his. "Oh, Faustine, I cannot!" he exclaimed with overflowing vehemence, and pressed her to his heart.

'"Oh, this is not right," said she, still with the same expression of sadness in look and tone.

'"Pardon, Faustine," said Mario, more softly, and his hand glided lightly over her hair, and across her cheek—"For I love you."

'All at once she stood up, disengaged from his arm, in front of him. She spread out her arms not towards him, but upwards to heaven, and with a joyful ecstatic tone, exclaimed, "He loves me!"

'"Whither, then, with this agitating glow, Faustine, if not to me?" cried Mario, and flung his arms round her as if to chain her to his side.

'"He loves me!" she repeated with the same inward enthusiasm. She clasped his head with both her hands, gazed on him, then shook her own slowly, and said as in a dream: "But that cannot be true."

'"Not true? Oh, Faustine! have you not felt how, by degrees, my very existence has become blended with your own; how my heart has learned to beat in your breast; my spirit to fly in your direction; my whole being to keep pace with yours? Is not that love, Faustine?"

'"Oh, but that is dreadful!"

'"Why, Faustine, angel, you love me."

'"I!" exclaimed she, and passed her hand across her brow. "I—you? You are strangely mistaken, Count Mengen."

'Mario's radiant features were suddenly convulsed. He

moved Faustine from him, and said, in a menacing tone—"Faustine!"

'She sank into a chair. Her tears flowed fast, and there was an indescribable air of suffering in her whole frame. Mario had not the power to leave her, although at the first moment he had made a movement towards the door. He knelt before her, and said: "Faustine, how can you tell such an untruth?"

'"I tell no untruth," she murmured, without looking up.

'"Look in my face, firmly and quietly, and now answer me—Do you not love me, Faustine?"

'"*No!*" said she, in a hardly audible tone; but unconsciously her eyes rested on him with such heavenly tenderness, that he exclaimed, enchanted—"Your sweet deceitful lips speak false! your eyes say *yes*, and I believe *them*."

'"No, no!" she exclaimed, in increasing agony, and held both hands before her eyes; "do not mind the treacherous eyes; the lips speak the truth."

'"Faustine," said Mengen, rising up, and his angry voice grew more terrifying from the tremulousness which excitement threw into it; "if you do not love me; if all has been but trifling—the amusement of an idle hour: if you have lavished the whole fascination of your nature as a vulgar coquetry: if you have accustomed yourself to such a disregard of the feelings of others, as to anatomise living, beating, bleeding hearts, for your instruction or your sport, then I have no expression for my contempt."

'"Mario!" shrieked Faustine, and sank upon her knees, "I love you!"'

She now gives him the history of her life. She was married young to a commonplace man, Count Obernau. She felt no love for him, and, before she became his wife, she told him so; but he assured her that the required feeling would come in good time, and that they

should do very well together if it did not. But everything about him was repelling to her sensitive impulsive character, and she naturally enough caught at the first offer of sympathy. An attachment grew up between Baron von Andlau and herself, not discouraged by her husband, who had begun to get tired of her, and thought her incapable of loving anyone, since she had failed to love him. Set on by his sister, however, he took to watching them, and soon surprised them in an attitude of tenderness, which, though not quite irreconcilable with purity, was certainly calculated to put the most philosophical husband's philosophy to the test. Obernau runs for his pistol, and insists on Andlau's fighting him. 'Andlau retained his composure, conjured him to spare me, and not make a public scandal; whilst I stood like a statue, deprived of speech, thought, and reflection; nor did I recover my faculties until a pistol shot was discharged, and Andlau fell at my feet. Then I knew what I had to do! I ordered horses, conveyed him to his own house, sent for surgeons, and stayed with him. Obernau, the whole world, were nothing to me from that hour.' The husband pressed her to return; 'I will never,' she replied, 'return to the house of a man who has degraded himself and me in the eyes of the world.' He, on his part, refuses to consent to a divorce, and when, two years after the breach, he dies, she herself declines becoming the wife of Andlau, from a fantastic aversion to a tie which had made her so miserable.

'"I thank you," said Mengen, "for unveiling your destiny to me, and doubly do I thank you, since I see nothing in it to separate us."

'Faustine looked up at him without speaking, and passed her hand across her eyes, as if to convince herself that she was awake.

'"Nothing! for you love me, and Andlau—you love no longer; for, if you still loved him, your eye would never have alighted on me with any other than the indifferent friendly glance you have for everybody."

. . . .

'"Oh, then, I am miserably false!" said she, in a hollow voice.

'"And what would you be if you remained standing between two men, fascinating both, belonging half to each, wholly to neither? And what would you be if you returned back with a divided heart to him whom you *have* loved, and said, 'I love another, but I will be true to you?' You love the good, the beautiful, the high, wherever you find it, Faustine—that makes you so fascinating; and you are too much the slave of the present to chain yourself lastingly to an individual—that makes you weak. I will not defend this weakness, because you might then reproach me with sophistry or accuse me of speaking for my own interest. But trust me—if you were my sister, I would say the same. Untruth is a torn, half-wavering existence—a contradiction in the soul; end it by a prompt decision, by an irrevocable step, and you have freed yourself. Choose, choose, Faustine!" cried Mario, and the composure with which he had hitherto spoken was changed into the most troubled passion—"now, directly, on the spot! In half an hour, I leave this room, and it depends on you whether I shall ever enter it again; for we cannot go on as formerly."'

She still hesitates; but his decision of character controls her in her own despite, and he leads her to the writing-table.

'"Now—write, Faustine."

'"Oh God!" gasped she, and sank into the chair—"I cannot?"

'"Then I must," said Mario, composedly.

'"Are you mad?" cried she, beside herself. "No! no hand but my own shall plunge the dagger into his heart; for I am doing it, I know."

'"Yes," said Mario; "his or mine."

. . . . .

'"See, you have no alternative. Granted you plunged it into mine, what would you do next? Say nothing to Andlau?—That is not possible for you. Besides, he would guess that you are not the same; and, if he inquired, how would you be able to play the hypocrite—to lie? Suppose you told him what has occurred. Do you believe he would be able to shake off the impression? Were it a caprice on your side—if, in an idle hour, you had amused yourself by trifling with me—he might smile at it, and be comforted. Can he now?"

'"Never!" and she seized the pen. She wrote as follows:—"Anastasius, your last word at parting has come true. I have forgotten you—no, not you, but myself. I mean, I have forgotten that I could or would live in you alone. We must never see each other again, Anastasius. By this decision I ruin your life, and I do not even entreat your forgiveness. You will know best what to think of Faustine."'

On a former occasion, when Faustine playfully asked Andlau to pay her the compliment of a little jealousy, he replied—'You know that with me there can never be any question of jealousy, because I acknowledge no rival. I readily surrender to another the property which he extends his hand to seize.' He acted up to his

principle. No reply of any sort was returned for many months; but, as she said herself, the letter was his death-warrant.

Faustine's aversion to matrimony is overcome by Mengen's arguments:—

'"Do you suppose I could contentedly resign myself to an equivocal connection, open to every misconstruction, where there is no reason for it beyond feminine caprice? Thousands may do homage to you: many may love you: your husband alone can protect and honour you, as you ought to be protected and honoured."'

She promises to marry him as soon as he has obtained the consent of his parents, and he departs. Whilst he is absent, a harrowing incident occurs. Clement Wallsdorf shoots himself in her presence for love of her. Mario returns, snatches her from a scene of horror, and marries her.

Here the regular narrative breaks off, and the conclusion is related by the authoress in her own person, as she heard it from Mario, whom she meets in Venice five or six years afterwards, with his child, the child of Faustine.

They had lived happily beyond expectation for five years, and Faustine was the pet, the pride of his family. 'Intellectual supremacy—which makes ordinary women so unendurable, that we feel them as a troublesome appendage, something like an illustrious name in poverty—seemed given her to show that the most superior women can be the most amiable. She quietly folded her wings to prevent others from feeling they had none; but at the slightest encouragement, she spread them

and flew up, and caused the ethereal lustre, the bloom, of her region, to play down into our circle.' But there is a canker in the rosebud. She is restless without knowing why, and teases Mengen with fancies, which his strong good sense is unable to keep down. 'Il n'y a de satisfaction ici-bas que pour les âmes, ou brutales ou divines!' she exclaims with Montaigne, and longs for a cloister where she may pour out her soul in prayer. 'Mario, to adore eternally—that would make me happy.' She has a fit of painting, and the pursuit of fame diverts her for a time. With the proud consciousness of genius, she would say:

'"The thirst for glory is a consciousness of futurity: he who does not believe in his own future, deserves no present. That my pictures may be simply in the taste of the day, and therefore without a future, often weighs heavily on my heart. I know that I possess a precious treasure; still, whether I shall work it up into jewels, or coins, or what else, I know not; at least not precisely. We deceive ourselves in the value of our productions, like mothers in the beauty of their children. Petrarch expected immortality from his poem 'Africa,' and obtained it by his 'Sonnets.' It would be lamentable if I left nothing behind me but 'Africas.'"'

Mario tries the effect of a journey to the East. The experiment answers whilst the novelty lasts, and then she is as restless as ever. 'I will travel no more; I know now that the earth is the same everywhere, and mankind too; only the surface is varied; in one by climate, in another by temperament. The new is always something old, and the something different is

always the same. That can never satisfy.' In vain does he remind her that complete satisfaction is not to be expected, because never intended for us, on earth;—that if, by a miracle, every wish could be satisfied and every aim attained, she would weep, like Alexander, for more worlds to conquer. In vain does he endeavour to reanimate her former enthusiasm for painting, poetry, and fame.

'"To what purpose?" was her answer. "That which is not of the first class need not exist at all, and only two or three books, and as many works of art, are of the first class. Each of these made an era, struck out a path, gave a direction. This depended not on him who wrote, or painted, or constructed them, but on God's sending him into the world at the very moment when an efficient instrument was needed."

. . . . . .

'"You love me no longer!" I exclaimed with bitterness.

'"Fool!" she replied, with that ecstatic smile which I never saw on any brow but hers. "Have you not touched the tabernacle of my heart? Is not my son yours? No, Mario, I love you; I have loved nothing so much; I shall never love anything *after* you, but *above* you—God. My soul has squandered itself in such transports of love and inspiration with yours, that all it can ever meet with in this region, will be but a repetition, and perhaps—an insipid one. They have so broken up my heart in searching for its treasures, that the gold mines are probably exhausted."

'"Dearest Mario, do not grudge me a little, a very little, rest on this side of the grave! If you did but know how weary I am, you yourself would guide me to another path."

'"You are striking into a false one," I replied, "for you are about to be false to all your duties. Have you not vowed

before God to stay by me in weal and in woe? Have you not the childhood of your son to watch over, and his youth to guide? Have you not your genius to cherish?—that gift, more heavenly than any, because a voice of power, of truth, of consolation for mankind.

'"Faustine, do not forget that the crown of thorns is inseparable from the crown of glory; the deepest pangs have given birth to the highest genius! He who would rise again, must suffer himself to be bound upon the cross! He who would ascend to heaven, must not fear the descent into hell. By what right would you enjoy only the sunny side of everything?"'

Her resolution is confirmed by a meeting with Andlau, who dies of a disease in the chest, brought on by the wound received from her husband. She reaches his deathbed just time enough to see him die. 'She murmured in a scarcely audible tone, "*Anastasius;*" and he, who was insensible to everything else, heard her voice, unclosed his eyes, smiled, tried to reach out his hand towards her, uttered "*Ini*," and expired.'

She entered a convent of the *Vive Sepolte* at Rome, and died five months afterwards, a model of piety and humility.

This, it must be allowed, is a fine, but wild conception; and it may be true that there is nothing in actual life resembling it;—even in Germany, where all varieties of female character are to be found in much greater plenty than in any other country. Nor is there anything in actual life resembling an Undine, a Psyche, a Mignon, a Sylphide. These finer natures—these creatures of the imagination and the heart—are, and are meant to be, the very opposite of Wordsworth's

household charmer—perhaps little less poetical, and certainly more useful in her way:

> 'A creature not too bright or good,
> For human nature's daily food;
> For transient sorrows, simple wiles,
> Praise, blame, love, kisses, tears, and smiles.'

They must be tried by a different standard; and the first questions in the present instance are:—Was the author's object an artistical and legitimate one, and is it attained by the book?

She wanted a vehicle for developing her theory of existence, her notions of genius, her reflections on the mind, her experience of the heart. For this purpose she frames a character, eccentric and fantastic, but full of life, light, and grace; made up of many qualities which are seldom found together—depth and volatility, humility and self-confidence, truth and fickleness; and endowed with many gifts—feeling, fancy, knowledge, thought, sensibility, beauty, genius—which are as rarely united in one woman as the mingled beauties of exulting Greece. Yet Madame Hahn-Hahn has moulded them into a harmonious whole, which not merely satisfies the critic's judgment, but (what is of more importance) keeps up the reader's interest to the end. There are some episodical passages and conversations which bear rather loosely on the main story, but even these open glimpses, and suggest reflections, which we should be sorry to have missed.

In a concluding paragraph, the author, addressing a male companion, says: 'Women like Faustine are the avenging angels of our sex, which Providence sends oc-

casionally, but rarely, upon earth, and to whom the best of you fall a prey; for only the best of you are prepared—as the mass of women are—to give a heart for a heart, a life for a life, an entire existence for an entire existence.—Beware of the Faustines!' This would be tantamount to saying, 'Beware of me, Ida, Gräfin Hahn-Hahn!' if the report regarding the identity of the characters were true; but she indignantly repels the insinuation. In a subsequent work,[1] a conversation takes place regarding 'Georgiona,' by 'Gräfin Schönholm,' both feigned names:

'"I assure you she has copied herself and the incidents of her life."

'"But nature cannot be copied: it must be conceived so as to make part of the mind, in order to be naturally portrayed. Gräfin Schönholm is said to be 'Georgiona,' just as Lord Byron was said to be Childe Harold, and Madame de Staël Corinne. That is now become an established practice; if an author writes with an air of reality, the incidents are said to be real; and what he has felt and lived inwardly, he is supposed to have gone through in actual life."'

In the same work (vol. ii. p. 196) a sort of moral is suggested: 'Have not most women, in proportion as they are more richly gifted, some resemblance to Faustine, particularly in their thirst for emotion? *We* get tired of a good, commonplace, matter-of-fact mother of a family; and an imaginative, fanciful, fascinating woman, full of mind and sensibility, who keeps us in a constant state of excitement, gets tired of *us*.' In other words, in feeling as in mechanics, what is gained in time or duration is lost in intensity or strength: we

[1] *Ulrich*, vol. i. p. 225.

cannot have it both ways: we cannot keep our cake and eat it too; or, to adopt the more dignified language of Lord Byron, those who cannot rest satisfied without an unbroken succession of high-wrought emotions, must make up their minds to be constantly fluctuating 'between the misery of disappointment and the misery of satiety.'

'Ulrich' is the work which, next to 'Faustine,' has attracted most attention. The author has taken a larger canvas, and crowded it with figures; but we lose in compactness what we gain in variety. We also see in it, what is not unusual in her works, the want of a settled purpose—a definite aim, at the commencement: a defect which Sir Walter Scott frankly acknowledged in his own.

Three young ladies leave a celebrated establishment in Heidelberg on the same day: Unica, the daughter of Count Erberg; Clotilda, the daughter of the Frankfort banker, Marana; and Margarita, the daughter of an impoverished widow of noble birth, the Freifrau von Ringoltingen. Clotilda marries Count Oswald, an elderly, ugly, and weak-minded man, for the sake of his title; Margarita marries Prince Thierstein, to please her mother; Unica contracts a girlish attachment for young Marana, the banker's son; but her proud parents will not hear of such a union, and press her to marry her cousin, Count Ulrich Erberg, the owner of the adjoining château, for whom, at first, she feels no inclination.

'Ulrich, it must be owned, could not be termed handsome; he had fine but strong features, a bilious complexion,

eyebrows which almost touched, and, together with his hair and whiskers, darkened his face too much; but the indescribably noble expression of his brow, his fine figure, small feet and hands (the inheritance of aristocracy), and simple bearing, were far from making a disagreeable impression on the whole.'

We quote this description in an abridged shape, because Ulrich may be regarded as Madame Hahn-Hahn's beau-ideal of a lady-killer. Thus, although he expresses little more than respectful affection for Unica, and it is obvious that his thoughts are constantly wandering, she consents to marry him, and resolves to win his love. Her first step is a somewhat anomalous one for a bride. On reaching her room, on the wedding night, he finds her gloved and bonneted as for a walk:

'Ulrich's first movement was a step towards the door, his second to pass his hand over his forehead, and throw back his head, as he often did, when he sought to master an unpleasant feeling.

'"My dear Unica, have the goodness to tell me what this means?"

'She turned half round, and said, dryly and peremptorily, "I would be alone."

'Ulrich gazed on her with an indescribable mixture of pride and melancholy, and replied—"Why do you suddenly drive me from you, Unica? It gives me pain, and will do you harm."

'A gleam of triumph shot across her face, and in a more decided tone she repeated—"I would be alone."

'"You wish, then, to be alone now—*and for ever*," he said, without sharpness, without bitterness, without ill-humour, but with an unconquerable decisiveness. Unica

felt this. Twice had her resolution been shaken: it should not be so a third time.

'"*Now, and for ever*," she said. Ulrich bent his head proudly, and retired to his own room.'

There is an English novel of considerable merit in which a union begins in the same manner, and ends happily. Unica calculated on a similar result, and meant merely to pique her husband into a passion for her. Unfortunately, she had not calculated on the effects of an early love affair, which, though transitory in its duration, had left ineffaceable traces on his heart. To quiet her fears on another account, he relates it to her.

He begins with a remark which would seem to imply, that Germany has lost a little of its characteristic earnestness:

'"A man now-a-days can do nothing more unbecoming — that is to say, nothing more laughable—than confess himself to be mastered by a feeling. It is not merely the men—even the women look upon him as a simpleton; for love, the *passion*, is out of fashion. It is no longer to satisfy the heart, to absorb our existence, but to gratify our vanity, and (when matters come to the highest pass) our senses. No La Vallière takes refuge with her rejected heart amongst the Carmelites; no De Rance flies to La Trappe after seeing his beloved Duchesse de Montbazon in the pangs of death."'

This view of the matter is a superficial and impatient one. Modern men and women are as capable of passion as their forefathers: hearts beat as wildly under embroidered waistcoats as under steel cuirasses; and love plays a much more important part in the lives

of most of us than we are willing to confess. Who, for example, would have expected to find Bentham (see his 'Memoirs'), in his eightieth year, writing to the object of his first and only love, to remind her of the present of a flower! 'From that day not a single one has passed (not to mention nights) in which you have not engrossed more of my thoughts than I could have wished.' If other men of strong feelings could be induced to register their emotions, we should probably soon have a series of confessions as startling as Rousseau's.

Neither is it true that great sacrifices are unknown. Not three years since a man of fortune, connection, and accomplishment, long past what is commonly called the more susceptible period of life, but in the full enjoyment of his faculties, suddenly retired from the world in consequence of a disappointment of the heart; and he is now (1844) living in a small island, uninhabited except by a solitary attendant and himself. The best knight that ever lived could do no more for a duchess.

It is admitted that a few are still cast in the mould of the olden time, and Ulrich is one of them. He meets a beautiful unknown, named Melusina, on the Lake of Como, and falls desperately in love with her. She returns his passion, and they live very pleasantly together for a month; at the end of which her holiday is up; and she leaves him as wise as when they met regarding her family or position, after exacting a promise that he will neither follow nor inquire for her. Four years pass away, during which he thinks of nothing else, when one morning he sees her in Berlin with a

child, whom he supposes to be his own. The mystery is cleared up at the opera, where Melusina happens to occupy the next box. She sees him, faints away, and makes a scene. He carries her to her carriage, and returns to his party.

'"My dear Ulrich," whispered my aunt, as I resumed my place beside her, "the attention of the whole audience is fixed on you."

'"So let it," I replied unconcernedly.

'"But, good Heaven!" exclaimed she impatiently, "do you not know that you have given yourself *en spectacle* with the mistress of the —— Minister?"

'I was spirit-broken, I am so still. The object of my worship is cast down into the dust where all may tread upon it; and yet I have found nothing on earth so beautiful as Melusina. Between contempt and adoration, disgust and longing—the bitterest and the sweetest feelings—I stand powerless; for I loathe the life in which nothing is so beautiful as a painted lie.'

Gratitude, or vanity, induces men to make ample allowances for faults committed for their own dear sakes; and Ulrich had a perfect right to believe in some kind of mystic pre-ordained union of souls, which made it quite natural and proper for Melusina to dispense with ceremony; but surely it was a little unreasonable to expect that a woman, whose acquaintance he had formed under such peculiar circumstances, would turn out a pattern of purity; and instead of fainting away and having a brain-fever, he should have exclaimed,—

'I ask not, I know not, if guilt's in that heart,
I but know that I love thee, whatever thou art.'

Ulrich's story is by no means consolatory to his wife, but they get on pretty well till he pays a visit to Prince Thierstein—a rough-mannered, narrow-minded man, who has married Margarita, Unica's schoolfellow, in the hope of continuing his race. She enters the dining-room, and Ulrich is presented to her. 'Silently she received him, and silent, breathless, lost to everything around him, stood Ulrich; for Melusina, but Melusina without a shade of sin or sorrow, Melusina, younger, brighter, stood before him as Margaret, Princess of Thierstein.' They are, in fact, sisters, but this does not appear till long afterwards, when Ulrich has transferred his affections to Margaret. Their attachment forms the grand feature of the book, and gives rise to a great variety of scenes and reflections. The character of Margaret is finished with great care; and we must pause to quote a passage:

'Perhaps Ulrich alone knew what a deep knowledge of things she possessed; for in society she seldom gave vent to her thoughts, and spoke with few words. "I am not in the same key with society," she once said to Ulrich; "consequently what I say is too high or too low for the general symphony. I am obliged to perform solos, or duets with you." This neither amazed nor distressed her; she neither sought to catch the tone or gain the opinion of others. She had the indifference of genuine superiority, namely, the most complete indifference regarding the approbation of the mass. Certain persons sometimes acquire an extraordinary reputation in the world for wit, talent, or genius. *In general, this proves nothing more than that they are of the precise height which places them on a level with the crowd; both what they are, and what they produce, exactly corresponds with its*

demands. Were this more, or did they produce more, they would instantly lose this happy equipoise, be out of proportion to the measuring rod applied to them, and only be able to compel the recognition of their superiority by overwhelming proofs. The artist, the author, may give such proofs; but daily life, and the social circle, do not always afford fine minds and opportunity for development.'

After some months of dangerous intimacy, they separate. 'Remain far from me,' are Margaret's parting words, 'till I call you, and this call will first reach you from my grave.' Ulrich writes her an imprudent letter, which falls into her husband's hands. He casts her off, and she retires to live in a small cottage in Switzerland with her child. Ulrich, ignorant of the consequences of his imprudence, resolves to travel for some years, and, as a preliminary measure, requires his wife to agree to a divorce. It is at length agreed between them, that things shall remain unaltered for the present; but in case he comes back within three years and renews the demand, she shall consent.

After rambling for more than a year in Russia, he arrives in Stockholm, where a returned letter, addressed by him to Margaret at her husband's house, reaches him. This makes him desperate, and he devotes himself during several months to an opera-singer, in the hope of driving Margaret from his thoughts. Whilst at Stockholm he pays a visit to the celebrated authoress, the Countess Ilda Schönholm, and it is difficult to believe that no living person is intended.

'Ulrich had heard a great deal about her, both praise and blame; had read all her books, and formed an image of her

in his own mind which by no means agreed with the original. He possessed taste and penetration enough not to regard a woman who had written a book as a caricature on body and soul; but involuntarily he had made the imposing de Staël —with her genius, her passion, her vanity, her goodness, her fancy, her enthusiasm—his type of an authoress; and turned Ilda into a German de Staël. Not a trace of it. Composed and simple, firm without haughtiness, negligent without affectation, indifferent regarding the impression which she made, she did not give herself the smallest trouble to attract attention. Whether she disdained the littleness of the means used to produce an effect, or found the end too petty, or had the intimate conviction of a superiority which repels the many and attracts a few—but attracts them irresistibly, as the loadstone the steel,—suffice it to say, not a word, not a syllable, not the most distant indication, betrayed her talent and her customary occupations.'

The causes of the differences between authors and their works are explained, in a very striking essay in Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton's 'Student.' The secret of Madame Hahn-Hahn's anxiety to dissipate some supposed delusion on this subject, is the prejudice still prevalent amongst the highest classes in Germany against female authorship.

Ilda wears a gown of black velvet, with plain wristbands and collar; and here we may take occasion to observe that Madame Hahn-Hahn seldom fails to give a minute description of the dresses of her favourites; rightly thinking it impossible to convey an exact impression of the person without the dress. She also attaches considerable importance to the feet, and has propounded a new theory regarding them, which may serve as a pendant or counterpoise to Lord Byron's

regarding hands, which (his own being small and well-shaped) he declared to be the only mark of birth which aristocracy can generate. Madame Hahn-Hahn says:

'There is much more physiognomy in the feet than in the hands. The hands are so ill-treated, so practised in coquetry, so ruined by artistical skill—the piano turns the fingers into little knobs—that a hand seldom preserves its original character from the levelling effect of daily use; and when it does, it is not what is commonly called a handsome hand. That must be plump, round, smooth, white as marble, and marked with blue veins. I have an antipathy to such a one: the thought of touching it chills me; it has something of the smoothness of the snake, the coldness of the fish, and at times I fancy, if geese had no wings, they would have just such hands. The foot has remained in its primitive state. The princess may destroy it by too much care, and the peasant girl by neglect; still it must support the body; it is in keeping with it as the base with the pillar; and its tread, its bearing, correspond with the character of the person. If I had a taste for solid pursuits, I would set up my system against craniology.'

We need hardly add, that Ilda Gräfin Schönholm is described as having well-formed, tapering, thoroughbred feet.

Just as Ulrich is getting tired of his opera-singer, he receives a letter, signed 'Melusina,' informing him that Margaret, thrown off and abandoned on his account, is living near Vevay. It now appears that they are sisters. Melusina eloped at sixteen with a man who subsequently abandoned her at Paris; where she became acquainted with an elderly diplomatist, who, during his life, protected her as a parent, and left her a good

fortune at his death. This was the Ambassador with whom Ulrich had seen her at Berlin. Ulrich leaves Stockholm, procures Unica's consent to a divorce, and travels post-haste to Vevay, where he finds Melusina dying, and Margaret watching over her. Melusina joins their hands, and dies.

When Voltaire wished to depreciate Rousseau, he made a short abstract of the plot of 'La Nouvelle Heloïse,' and headed it *De ce qui se fait dans le livre de Jean Jacques.* He could not have hit on a more effective method of conveying an injurious impression of a work of manners or feeling; particularly when, as in the work before us, the bare incidents require a good deal of shading, to prevent harsh inferences from being founded on them.

Let it be remembered then, that, since both law and custom legitimatize a marriage with the sister of a deceased wife in Germany, there is no more harm in Ulrich's becoming attached to the two sisters successively than to any other two women. Neither must the comparative carelessness with which the marriage tie is dissolved, be charged altogether to the account of the individual; for it is principally attributable to the facility with which divorces are obtained. In Prussia there are fifteen distinct grounds of divorce *a vinculo matrimonii* enumerated in the Code, any one of which is sufficient;—the infidelity of either party, incompatibility of temper, and mutual consent, being of the number.

Prussia is indebted to Frederick II. for the existing laxity of its laws in this respect. The other Protestant

states retain, nominally, most of the pristine strictness; but whether from the influence of example, or other local causes, they are practically as loose as their neighbour. When a couple are anxious to be free, it is simply necessary for one of them to be detected in an equivocal situation (it need not be one of positive guilt), and their wishes may be gratified. What is there wanted is a more careful inquiry into cases of collusion, which, when known, and recognised as such, are not even attended with much danger to reputation.

Opinions may vary as to the degree of strictness with which the marriage vow should be maintained; but it is impossible not to see that the tie must lose its sacredness, if it is liable to be set aside on the first growth of a new inclination—the first feeling of satiety —the first discovery of a difference in taste or temper —or (for it all comes to this) the first suggestion of caprice. Indeed, we are quite sure that not one couple in ten ever lived together, for a series of years, without intervals of struggle—without hours, days, weeks, when it required all their firmness, all their good sense, all their consciousness of the true nature of their position, to induce them to bear and forbear, till the habit of mutual concession became a pleasure, and the basis of a fixed affection had been laid. It stands to reason that the public opinion of Germany must be in a loose state regarding marriage, and we must not blame the novelist for representing types of her country and her time.

It is satisfactory to be able to say that Madame Hahn-Hahn is not one of those writers who exhaust themselves in two or three efforts; who hoard up a

limited stock of thought and observation, pour it all into their first books, and remain dry and unproductive during the remainder of their days. We are by no means sure that her last book, 'Cecil,' is not her best both in conception and execution, though parts of it are spun out to tediousness. Moreover, it opens new ground, being an attempt to trace the influence of worldliness—that sort of worldliness which honourable and enlightened parents would think it right to encourage in a son—on a man of talent and sensibility, who has his fortune to make. The effect is judiciously heightened by contrast. The most prominent female character is a woman who consults only her own sense of duty, and uniformly does what she thinks right, without reference to opinion or the slightest regard to consequences.

We cannot afford room for a detailed examination; and with regard to the rest of the novels named in our list, we can only say that they are all distinguished, more or less, by the same qualities as 'Faustine' and 'Ulrich;' and that it is necessary to read all, in order thoroughly to enjoy any one; since (like Balzac's 'Scènes de la Vie Privée') all the stories are connected, and form something like a succession of *tableaux*. Thus, the Countess Schönholm, who holds such long conversations with Ulrich at Stockholm, and his correspondent Ohlen, are leading personages in 'Aus der Gesellschaft' and 'Der Rechte;' and the fate of Sigismund Forster, in the story of that name, materially influences the fortunes of 'Cecil.' It is obvious that these occasional renewals of intimacy with old acquaint-

ance may be made extremely agreeable; and in the cases before us, the contrivance has been skilfully and not too frequently employed.

It was part of our design at starting, to endeavour to deduce some general rules regarding German morals and manners from these books; but had we space at present, it would be neither fair nor logical to found any broad conclusion or comparison on so slender a basis as the writings of a single author.[1] Her countrymen and countrywomen would certainly have no reason to complain; for both conclusion and comparison would be favourable to them. The tone of the best society, in most of their great towns, would appear to be remarkable for ease, good taste, readiness to amuse and be amused, and for the marked discouragement, if not total absence, of offensive pretension, or exclusiveness. There is the usual allowance of trifling and gossiping: examples of prejudice, ignorance, and vanity are not wanting, and much of the conversation is made up of conventional commonplaces: yet it is impossible to help feeling that social intercourse stands on a sound rational basis, and has attained a high degree of refinement and agreeability. This is probably nearly the same all the world over among the best of the higher classes, who are now everywhere found coalescing with all that is

[1] The best account of the habits and manners of the eastern and north-eastern parts of Germany will be found in a novel in three volumes, *Soll und Haben*, by Gustavus Freytag, admirably translated by Mrs. Malcolm, and published under the title of *Debt and Credit*. It has merits of a high order, besides graphic descriptions of every-day life, and forms a marked contrast to the common run of German novels.

really worth cultivating among the rest. Still, curious points of difference, affecting manners or morals, might be selected.

For example, an Englishwoman seldom leaves her house unattended, or without a *chaperon*, and would be seriously compromised were she to travel much with a man not nearly related to her. In Germany, a woman may undertake a journey, of any length or duration, with a male friend of any age, without compromising herself; that is, if their vocations really call them the same way, and the journey be not undertaken as a blind. The Germans, in short, do not take for granted that opportunity will necessarily create inclination; or that friends will be converted into lovers by sitting together in a carriage during the daytime and occupying apartments in the same hotel at night. In one novel, we find a countess travelling with a handsome young artist: in another, an aged President gives his wife full permission to travel with a young member of his court; and we find, on inquiry, that such occurrences would excite no more comment in actual life than in Madame Hahn-Hahn's pages. The same liberty is enjoyed by women in the United States. In England, however, when a middle-aged nobleman, of grave habits, happens to state, in a letter to a Bishop (a curious confidant for a *liaison*) that he has been taking a ten days' tour with an accomplished female friend (Lady Davy), his excellent and right reverend editor feels it a duty to bear personal testimony to the purity of their intentions.[1] It

[1] *Letters of the Earl of Dudley to the Bishop of Llandaff*, p. 353. Lady Davy was angry with the Bishop for his justification; con-

might be made an instructive question, how far the strictness of the English rule indicates a superior state of morals, or the contrary.

The best of Madame Hahn-Hahn's books of Travels are her 'Reisebriefe,' being Letters to various members of her family (from October 1840, to November 1841), describing a journey across the Provençal country, over the Pyrenees, and through the greater part of Spain and Portugal. With an enthusiastic love for the fine arts, a marked preference for the romance of history, and a mind crowded with associations, she carries us along lightly and pleasantly enough. We may not have to thank her for much constitutional or statistical information; but we learn the aspects of the cities and the habits of the people; pick up some agreeable reminiscences about Moors and Troubadours; acquire a fresh feeling for Velasquez and Murillo, as well as a fresh relish for Don Quixote and Gil Blas; are made eye-witnesses of *auto-da-fés* and bull-fights; and find the Alhambra restored for our especial benefit.

'Astralion, an Arabesque,' is a little dramatic poem, in which the *dramatis personæ* are birds, who talk in good rhymed verse on several subjects not connected with ornithology.

Madame Hahn-Hahn visited England, Scotland, and Ireland, in 1846, and made our social institutions, especially those affecting the well-being of the lower classes, her especial object of study. She embodied her

ceiving it to imply that she was incapable of inspiring illicit thoughts or wishes.

observations in a work, which was forwarded in manuscript from Naples to the writer of these pages, upon an understanding that he was to engage a translator and a publisher. Through some unaccountable oversight of the Foreign Office, the MS. never reached him till two years afterwards, by which time Madame Hahn-Hahn had lost all interest in it, and it was consequently returned to her. During the intervening period, a domestic affliction had induced her to join the Roman Catholic (the *Alleinseligmachende*) Church, and she has ever since devoted herself to religious and philanthropic objects, combining practical utility with earnestness in the promulgation of her faith. All her subsequent works, which are too numerous for even a brief analysis or description, are marked by strong Ultramontane tendencies. They betray no decline of intellectual power.

M. DE STENDHAL (HENRI BEYLE).

(FROM THE EDINBURGH REVIEW, JANUARY, 1856).

1. *Bibliothèque Contemporaine.* 2e Série. DE STENDHAL. Œuvres complètes. Paris: 1854–55.
2. *Romans et Nouvelles.* Précédés d'une Notice sur De Stendhal, par M. B. COLOMB. 1 vol.
3. *Correspondance Inédite.* Précédée d'une Introduction, par PROSPER MÉRIMÉE, de l'Académie Française; ornée d'un beau Portrait de Stendhal. 2 vols.

THE literary career of Henri Beyle, who wrote under the pseudonyme of De Stendhal, deserves to be commemorated, if only as a curious illustration of the caprice of criticism; or it may be cited in proof of the occasional readiness of contemporaries to forestall the judgment of posterity, when there is no longer a living and sentient object for their jealousy. His habits were simple, his tastes were of a nature to be easily and cheaply gratified, and his pecuniary wants were consequently of the most modest description. He would have been content, he tells us, to rub on with 4,000 francs a year at Paris: he would have thought himself rich with 6,000; and in an autobiographical sketch he says, 'The only thing I see clearly is, that for twenty years my *idéal* has been to live at Paris in a fourth

story, writing a drama or a novel.' This ideal was never realised, because the booksellers and theatrical managers would not, or could not, bid high enough for dramas or novels from his pen; and he was eventually compelled to accept the consulship of Civita Vecchia, where the closing period of his life was shortened by the diseases of the climate, as well as embittered by disappointment and ennui.

There occurred, indeed, one striking exception to this general indifference. In the 'Revue Parisienne' of September 23rd, 1840, appeared a long and carefully written article, entitled an 'Étude sur H. Beyle,' by Balzac, in which 'La Chartreuse de Parme' was declared to be a masterpiece, and its author was described as one of the finest observers and most original writers of the age. But although elaborately reasoned out, and largely supported by analysis and quotation, this honourable outburst of enthusiasm was commonly regarded as an extravagance into which Balzac had been hurried by an exaggeration of generosity towards a fancied rival; and Beyle's courteous letter of acknowledgment contains the following sentence, showing how little disposed he was to overestimate his position or his hopes:—'This astounding article, such as no writer ever before received from another, I have read, I now venture to own to you, with bursts of laughter. Every time I came to a eulogium a little exalted, and I encountered such at every step, I saw the expression of my friends' faces at reading it.'

Could he awake from the dead and see his friends' faces now, his characteristic smile of irony, rather than

loud laughter, would be the form in which his feelings might be most appropriately expressed; for those friends have not waited till 1880, the earliest era at which he expected to be read; they have barely exceeded the time prescribed by Horace—*nonumque prematur in annum*—for testing the soundness of a work. Beyle died in 1842, and few beyond the very limited circle of his intimates then seemed aware that a chosen spirit had departed, or that a well of valuable thought and a fountain of exquisite sensibility had been dried up. One solitary garland of *immortelles* was flung upon his grave. An essay on his life and character, by M. Auguste Bussière, appeared in the 'Revue des Deux Mondes' for January, 1843; but the first paragraph was an avowal of the hazardous character of the attempt:

'We approach a task which is at the same time both embarrassing and seducing, that of appreciating a man of talent whose upright character and original qualities seemed to promise a greater extent of influence than he has exercised on his contemporaries. We shall encounter in this mind and in this character odd specialities, strange anomalies, contradictions which will explain how, after having been more vaunted than read, more read than relished, more decried than judged, more cited than known, he has lived, if the expression may be used, in a sort of clandestine celebrity, to die an obscure and unmarked death. Contemporary literature, it must be owned, has found before the tomb of one of its most distinguished cultivators, only silence, or words worse than silence. M. Beyle dead, all has been said for him. His remains have not seen their funeral attendance swelled by those regrets which delight in display, and which come to seek under the folds of the pall a reflexion of the lustre shed by the living.'

Unlike the noble English poet, who, after an ordinary night's sleep, awoke and found himself famous, Beyle must have slumbered thirteen years, dating from the commencement of his last, long sleep, before he could have calculated on a similar surprise on waking. But his hour has come at last, and come sooner than he anticipated. We have now before us popular and cheap editions of almost all his books (thirteen volumes), in addition to two closely printed volumes of correspondence, and three volumes of novels from his unpublished MSS., bearing striking evidence to the assiduity with which every scrap of his composition has been hunted up. We have, moreover, a somewhat embarrassing superfluity of biographical notices from surviving friends, who, whatever their amount of agreement with Balzac in 1840, have no objection to respond to the popular demand for Beyle testimonials in 1855. Prefixed to the 'Correspondance' is a condensed and pithy series of clever, polished, highly illustrative, and by no means enthusiastic, notes and reminiscences by M. Mérimée. M. Sainte-Beuve has devoted two papers, distinguished by his wonted refinement and penetration, to Stendhal, in the 'Causeries de Lundi.' An extremely interesting biographical notice, drawn up by M. Colomb, Beyle's most attached friend and executor, from private papers and other authentic sources of information, is prefixed to the 'Romans et Nouvelles:' and by way of preface or introduction to the 'Chartreuse de Parme,' the publishers have judiciously reprinted the long-neglected *éloge* of Balzac.

As if to complicate the problem, Beyle's critics and

biographers announce and claim him as 'eminently French,' although he systematically ridiculed the vanity of his countrymen, reviled their taste, disliked the greater part of their literature, and, deliberately repudiating his country as 'le plus vilain pays du monde que les nigauds appellent la belle France,' directed himself to be designated as Milanese on his tombstone. Here is enough, and more than enough, to justify us in devoting our best attention to the social and intellectual phenomenon thus presented,—to say nothing of the interest we naturally take in the reputation of an author who, in straitened circumstances, ordered the complete collection of '*mon cher*' 'Edinburgh Review,' and appealed to its extended circulation as an unanswerable proof that the English are more reasonable in politics than the French.

Marie-Henri Beyle was born at Grenoble, on the 23rd of January, 1783, of a family which, without being noble, was classed and lived familiarly with the provincial aristocracy. One of his earliest preceptors was a priest, who sadly misunderstood and mismanaged his pupil. 'Beyle,' says M. Mérimée, 'was wont to relate with bitterness, after forty years, that one day, having torn his coat whilst at play, the Abbé entrusted with his education reprimanded him severely for this misdeed before his comrades, and told him he was a disgrace to religion and to his family. We laughed when he narrated this incident; but he saw in it simply an act of priestly tyranny and a horrible injustice, where there was nothing to laugh at, and he felt as acutely as

on the day of its occurrence the wound inflicted on his self-love.'

It was one of his aphorisms that our parents and our masters are our natural enemies when we enter the world; the simple matter of fact being, that his own character, tendencies, and aspirations had been invariably opposed to the plans, wishes, and modes of thinking of his family. They were clearly wrong in endeavouring to force him into uncongenial paths of study; nor was he likely to be cured of his inborn wilfulness, or his morbid sensibility, by harsh treatment. On the establishment of the École Centrale, in 1795, they had no alternative but to send him there; and such was his quickness or diligence, that when the day arrived for the examinations in 'grammaire générale,' not one of the pupils could compete with him, and he received all the prizes that had been proposed.

During the four following years he sustained his reputation by carrying off all the first prizes in all the courses that he attended; and at the end of that time, in 1798, he concentrated his energies on mathematics for (according to M. Colomb) the strange reason that he had a horror of hypocrisy, and rightly judged that in mathematics it was impossible. A more intelligible and more likely motive was his laudable ambition to be admitted into the Polytechnic School, for which he was about to become a candidate after much anxious preparation, when a sudden change took place in his prospects; and we find him in 1800, at the age of seventeen, a supernumerary in the ministry of war. He was indebted for this employment to the Daru family, which

was distantly related to his own; and when, early in the same year, the two brothers Daru were despatched to Italy on public duty of an administrative kind, they invited Beyle to rejoin them there on the chance of some fitting occupation for him turning up. He made the journey from Geneva to Milan on horseback, following so close on the traces of the invading army, that he had to run the gauntlet before the fort of Bard, which, overlooked from its insignificance, had wellnigh frustrated the most brilliant of Napoleon's early campaigns at starting.

Our young adventurer entered Milan at the beginning of June, 1800; and, on the 14th of the same month, had the good fortune to be present, as an amateur, at the battle of Marengo. An armistice having been signed the next day, he took advantage of it to visit, in company with a son of General Melas, the Boromean Isles and the other remarkable objects in the vicinity. Hurried away, we suppose, by the military spirit which animated all around him, Beyle entered a regiment of dragoons as quartermaster; and, in the course of a month, received a commission as sub-lieutenant. He served for about half a year as aide-de-camp to General Michaud, and received the most flattering certificate of courage and conduct; but before the expiration of a year (on September 17th, 1801) he was ordered to rejoin his regiment, then in garrison at Savigliano, in Piedmont, in consequence of a regulation forbidding any officer under the rank of lieutenant to be employed as aide-de-camp.

His life in a provincial town differed widely from

that of the brilliant staff-officer, which, divided between Brescia and Bergamo, with frequent excursions to Milan and the Isles, and thickly sown, says his biographer, with various and romantic sensations, realised his conceptions of perfect happiness. So soon as the treaty of Amiens afforded him an honourable pretext for quitting an inactive and unexciting course of life in the army, he flung up his commission, very much to the disgust of his patrons, and went to reside with his parents at Grenoble. Of course this experiment failed, but he made himself sufficiently disagreeable to extort an allowance of 150 francs a month from his father, with leave to live at Paris, where, in June, 1807, he took up his elevated abode (*au cinquième*) in the Rue d'Angivilliers, and without seeking for introductions or aiming at immediate distinction, calmly and resolutely set about educating himself anew.

Montesquieu, Montaigne, Cabanis, Destutt de Tracy, Say, J. J. Rousseau, were his favourite authors. He also made a careful study of Alfieri's tragedies; and out of his five francs a day he contrived to pay masters in English and fencing. He got on tolerably well in English, although his instructor was an Irishman with a touch of the brogue; but his skill with the foil was of so equivocal a description, that Renouvier, the director of the Salle Fabien, warned him to have recourse as seldom as possible to cold steel. His figure was ill adapted for active exercises; but his nerves, which grew tremulous at the slightest touch of emotion, were firm in the presence of danger: his eye was good, and he attained to such proficiency with the pistol as to be

able once, when anxious to display his skill, to bring down a bird upon the wing at forty yards' distance. The reputation thus acquired (by a happy accident) was far from useless for a man of his character, who was then daily liable to be called to account for the indiscreet indulgence of his peculiar humour. Towards the conclusion of his career he writes: 'I ought to have been killed a dozen times for epigrams or *mots piquants* that cannot be forgotten; and yet I have received only three wounds,—two of which are of little consequence, those in the hand and the left foot.' One of his maxims was, to seize the first occasion for a duel on entering life; and his recipe for a first duel, which he pronounced infallible, runs thus: 'Whilst your adversary is taking his aim, look at a tree, and begin counting the leaves. One preoccupation will distract from another of a graver kind. Whilst taking aim yourself, recite two Latin verses; this will prevent you from firing too quickly, and neutralise that five per cent. of emotion which has sent so many balls twenty feet above the mark.'

About this time (1803) Beyle formed the curious project of writing a comedy, in one act and in prose, to confute the critical canons of the celebrated Geoffroy. It was to be called 'Quelle Horreur! Ou, l'ami du despotisme pervertisseur de l'opinion publique.' He worked at it, from time to time, for ten or twelve years; and then definitively abandoned it. In 1805 he renewed the experiment of domestic life at Grenoble, which this time was curiously and characteristically interrupted. He fell in love with an actress; and, on

her leaving Grenoble on a professional engagement for Marseilles, he pretended a sudden inclination for commerce, and became clerk to a Marseilles firm of dealers in colonial produce, with whom he remained a year, when the lady married a rich Russian magnate, and Beyle returned to Paris. Having contracted a fixed taste for intellectual pursuits, he was with difficulty persuaded by his friends, the Darus, to attach himself once more to their fortunes. He complied, however, and rejoined them in Germany, where he was present, as a non-combatant, at the battle of Jena and witnessed the triumphant entry of Napoleon into Berlin in 1806. A few days after this event, Count Daru (the father) procured for Beyle the place of *intendant* of the domains of the Emperor in Brunswick, which he held two years, profiting by his residence in the Duchy to study the German language and philosophy. Here, again, he gave signal proof of both moral and physical courage. He put down an insurrection in a town, the garrison of which had just quitted it, by the bold expedient of arming the invalid soldiers left behind in a hospital, and suddenly leading them against the crowd. An instance of his energy as an administrator is thus related by M. Mérimée :—

'According to his wonted mode of showing himself worse than he was, he affected to despise the enthusiasm that made the men of his epoch do such great things. "We had the sacred fire," he observed, "and I among the rest, though unworthy. I had been sent to Brunswick, to levy an extraordinary contribution of five millions. I raised seven millions and I narrowly escaped being torn in pieces by the populace,

who were exasperated at the excess of my zeal. The Emperor inquired the name of the auditor who had so acted, and said "C'est bien."'

It would have been difficult to discover another auditor similarly circumstanced, who would have refrained from putting into his own pocket one, at least, of the two extra millions; and it is far from clear that the Emperor would have trusted or respected him less on that account, so long as the imperial demands were fully answered. Napoleon commonly knew to a fraction the amount of the illicit gains of his functionaries, as the famous contractor, Ouvrard, discovered to his cost. This man was once foolish enough to bet that Mademoiselle Georges would sup with him instead of keeping her known engagement to sup, on a specified night, at the Tuileries. He overcame her scruples by a bribe of 200,000 francs, and won his wager. The day following, he was ordered to attend the Emperor, and was thus quietly addressed:—'M. Ouvrard, you have gained five millions by your contracts for the supply of the army in Spain: you will pay two into the imperial Treasury without delay.' He paid therefore eighty thousand pounds for his *caprice* or vanity. This state of things and tone of feeling must be kept in mind in appreciating a man like Beyle, who, a confirmed voluptuary, after dealing with millions in times of commotion and confusion, died in exile because he could never muster capital enough to secure an annuity of 160*l.* a year.

In his capacity of auditor he was attached to the grand army during the invasion of Russia, and had his

full share of the glories, dangers, and privations of the retreat. He was among the few, says M. Mérimée, who, on this trying occasion, never forfeited the respect of others. One day, not far from the Beresina, Beyle presented himself, shaved and carefully dressed, before his chief:—'You have shaved as usual, I see,' observed M. Daru; 'you are a brave man (*un homme de cœur*).' In a letter from Moscow he has given one of the most graphic and picturesque accounts we are acquainted with of the fire. It concludes thus:

'We left the city lighted up by the finest conflagration in the world, forming an immense pyramid, which, like the prayers of the faithful, had its base on earth and its summit in heaven. The moon appeared above this atmosphere of flame and smoke. It was an imposing spectacle, but one ought to have been alone, or surrounded by men of mind, to enjoy it. That which has spoilt the Russian campaign for me, is to have made it with people who would have commonplaced the Coliseum and the Bay of Naples.'

He said he had not suffered so very much from hunger during the retreat, but found it impossible to recal to memory how he had procured food, or what he had eaten, with the exception of a lump of tallow for which he paid twenty francs, and which he always recollected with delight. Before setting out on this expedition he deemed it prudent to take especial precautions against the want of ready money. His sister replaced all the buttons of a surtout by gold pieces of twenty and forty francs, covered with cloth. On his return she asked if this expedient had answered. He had never once thought of it since his departure. By

dint of taxing his memory, he recalled a vague impression of having given the old surtout to the waiter of an inn near Wilna, with the gold buttons sewed up as at Paris. This incident, observes M. Colomb, is truly illustrative, for Beyle was excessively given to precaution, without a parallel for forgetfulness, and reckless to the last degree.

He abided faithfully by the declining fortunes of Napoleon, and did good service in the crisis of 1814; but he was destined never to enjoy the reward of his devotion; and when the crash came, he bore his ruin with so philosophical an air, that many superficial observers openly accused him of ingratitude and tergiversation. The best answer to such charges was his refusal to apply or lay himself out for office under the restored monarchy, although a fair opening was managed for him by his friends.

In August, 1814, he left Paris for Milan, where he resided till 1821, with the exception of visits to Paris and London in 1817. At Milan he enjoyed in perfection the precise kind of life which suited him. The opera was a never-failing source of enjoyment; and there was no department of the fine arts from which he could not draw both instruction and amusement at will. The cosmopolitan character of his taste may be inferred from the manner in which he speaks in a letter, dated October, 1818, of Viganò, the composer of ballets:

'Every man who has an immense success in his own country is remarkable in the eyes of a philosopher. Viganò, I repeat, has had this success. For example, 4,000 francs a

year has been usually paid to the composers of ballets: he has 44,000 for 1819. A Parisian will exclaim, *Fi, l'horreur!* He may speak in good faith; only I shall add aside, so much the worse for him. If Viganò discovers the art of writing gestures and groups, I maintain, that in 1860, he will be more spoken of than Madame de Staël. Therefore I have a right to call him a great man, or at least, a very remarkable man, and superior, like Rossini or Canova, to all that you have at Paris in the fine arts or literature.'

In another letter, in which he repeats and justifies this opinion, he says, 'I pass my evenings with Rossini and Monti: all things considered, I prefer extraordinary men to ordinary ones." Amongst the extraordinary men with whom he associated on familiar terms at Milan was Lord Byron, who addressed the following letter to him in 1823. By M. Mérimée's kindness, we are enabled to give a literal copy, the italics included:

'Genoa, May 29, 1823.

'Sir,—At present that I know to whom I am indebted for a very flattering mention in the "*Rome, Naples et Florence en* 1817," by M. Stendahl, it is fit that I should return my thanks (however undesired or undesirable) to Mr. Beyle, with whom I had the honour of being acquainted at Milan in 1816. You only did me too much honour in what you were pleased to say in that work; but it has hardly given me less pleasure than the praise itself, to become at length aware (which I have done by mere accident) that I am indebted for it to one of whose good opinion I am really ambitious. So many changes have taken place in the Milan circle, that I hardly dare recur to it; some dead, some banished, and some in the Austrian dungeons. Poor Pellico! I trust that in his iron solitude his muse is consoling him in

part—one day to delight us again, when both she and her poet are restored to freedom.

'Of your works I have only seen "*Rome*" and the "*Lives of Haydn and Mozart*," and the brochure on "*Racine and Shakespeare*." The "*Histoire de la Peinture*" I have not yet the good fortune to possess. There is one part of your observations in the pamphlet which I shall venture to remark upon; it regards Walter Scott. You say that "his character is little worthy of enthusiasm," at the same time that you mention his productions in the manner they deserve. I have known Walter Scott long and well, and in occasional situations which call forth the *real* character, and I can assure you, that his character is worthy of admiration,—that of all men he is the most *open*, the most *honourable*, the most *amiable*. With his politics I have nothing to do; they differ from mine, which renders it difficult for me to speak of them. But he is *perfectly sincere* in them,—and sincerity may be *humble*, but she cannot *be servile*. I pray you therefore to correct or soften that passage. You may perhaps attribute this officiousness of mine to a false affectation of *candour*, as I happen to be a writer also. Attribute it to what motive you please, but *believe* the truth. I say that Walter Scott is as nearly a thorough good man as man can be, because I know it by experience to be the case.

'If you do me the favour of an answer, may I request a speedy one? because it is possible (though not yet decided) that circumstances may conduct me once more to Greece. My present address is Genoa, where an answer will reach me in a short time, or be forwarded to me wherever I may be. I beg you to believe me, with a lively recollection of our brief acquaintance, and the hope of one day renewing it, your ever obliged and obedient humble servant,

'NOEL BYRON.

'P.S.—I make no excuse for writing to you in English,

as I understand you are well acquainted with that language.

'À Monsieur H. Beyle,
'Rue de Richelieu, No. 63, à Paris.'

In March, 1818, Beyle writes thus to a friend who was anxious that he should become a candidate for office:

'Without hating anyone, I have always been exquisitely abhorred by half of my official relations, &c. &c. To conclude, I like Italy. I pass from seven o'clock to midnight every evening in listening to music; the climate does the rest. Do you know that during the last six weeks we have been at 14° of Reaumur? Do you know that at Venice one lives like a gentleman for nine *lire* a day, and that the Venetian lira is fifty centimes. I shall live a year or two longer at Milan, then as much at Venice, and then in 1821, pressed by misfortune, I shall go to Cularo; I shall sell the apartment, for which I was offered 10,000 francs this year, and I shall try my fortune at Paris.'

By a strange coincidence of untoward events, which could not have been so much as guessed when this plan of life was sketched, he was eventually compelled to adhere to it. His father died in the course of the following year (June, 1819), and left him less than half of the 100,000 francs on which he had calculated; and in July, 1820, he writes to announce 'the greatest misfortune that could happen to him,'—'the hardest blow he had ever received in his life.' A report had got about, and was generally credited at Milan, that he was a secret agent of the French Government. 'It has been circulating for six months. I observed that many

persons tried to avoid saluting me: I cared little about this, when the kind Plana wrote me the letter which I enclose. I am not angry with him; yet here is a terrible blow. For, after all, what is this Frenchman doing here? Milanese simplicity will never be able to comprehend my philosophic life, and that I live here, on five thousand francs, better than at Paris on twelve thousand.' He had partly himself to blame for this disagreeable position; for he was fond of mystifying people by playing tricks with his name, or by adopting odd names and signatures, as well as by giving counterfeit, shifting, and contradictory descriptions of his birth, rank, and profession. Madame Ancelot (*Les Salons de Paris*) relates that he made it a condition, on accepting an invitation to one of her soirées, that he should come under any name he chose. He was announced as M. Cæsar Bombay, and mystified her friends by describing himself as purveyor of cotton nightcaps and stockings to the army, which, he said, was a higher and more useful vocation than man of letters. In his 'Mémoires d'un Touriste,' he assumes the character of an ironmaster.

'When,' says M. Colomb, 'he had to give his address to a tailor or bootmaker, it was rarely that he gave his real name. This led to *quid pro quos* which amused him. Thus he was inquired for by turns under the names of Bel, Beil, Bell, Lebel, &c. As to his profession, it depended on the caprice of the moment. At Milan he gave himself out for a superior officer of dragoons who had obtained his discharge in 1814, and son of a general of artillery. All these little inventions were but jokes; he never derived any advantage from them beyond a little amusement.'

This excuse might have been partially admissible if, in the aristocratic society of Milan, he had given himself out for an ex-corporal and the son of a tailor; but the assumption of a superior grade and higher birth savours strongly of a censurable amount of petty vanity; and such tricks were the height of folly in a town like Milan, where both the governing and the governed were naturally prone to suspect treachery.

Whilst he was yet hesitating what course to pursue, the police settled the matter by summarily ordering him to leave the Austrian territory, upon the gratuitous supposition that he was affiliated to the sect of Carbonari. From 1821 to 1830, he resided at Paris, where he was an established member of the circles which comprised the leading notabilities of the period, male and female:

'It is from this epoch,' says M. Colomb, 'that his reputation as *homme d'esprit*, and *conteur agréable* (both these terms are untranslatable) dates. Society listened with pleasure—with a sustained interest—to that multitude of anecdotes which his vast memory and his lively imagination produced under a graceful, coloured, original form. People recognised in the narrator the man who had studied and seen much, and observed with acuteness. Across the profound changes undergone by the *salon* life since 1789, he recalled attention, in a limited degree, to the taste which reigned at that time amongst those who guided it; he succeeded in generalising the conversation,—a difficult and almost disused thing in our days, when, if three people are gathered together, there are two conversations proceeding simultaneously without any connection; when *routs* resemble public places open to all

comers, and where about as much *esprit* is consumed as at a costume ball, composed of persons who see each other for the first time. Beyle's agreeability frequently enabled him to triumph over all the dissolvents which tend to destroy French society.'

And a very great triumph it was, if we consider the period and the angry passions which then divided the company he thus contrived to amalgamate by the introduction of well-chosen topics, by his felicitous mode of treating them, by his varied knowledge, his lively fancy, and his tact. The reason why M. Colomb is obliged to go back to a period antecedent to 1789 for his model of drawing-room life, is that the French thenceforth ceased to be the gay, laughing, pleasure-seeking nation of which we have read or heard traditionally. Serious practical politics are a sad drawback to lively and clever conversation, not merely because any dull fellow can bawl out the commonplaces of his party, but because the easy interchange of mind is impeded, and our thoughts are constantly reverting, in our own despite, to the absorbing and beaten questions of the hour. But the buoyant spirits and elastic energies of a rising generation cannot be kept down. The struggle of a new school of authors or artists with a declining or superannuated one affords ample scope for the display of wit, taste, and acquirement; and the contest between classicism and romanticism, which raged furiously during the last years of the Restoration, was admirably adapted to the genius of a Beyle.

There can hardly be a fairer test of the position

held by a man in his own country than the contemporary impression of an enlightened foreigner. In her 'France in 1829–1830,' Lady Morgan describes 'the brilliant Beyle' as the central figure of a group of notabilities at her hotel: and his *nom de guerre* figures thus with her ladyship's name in one of Viennet's versified epistles:

> 'Stendhal, Morgan, Schlegel,—ne vous effrayez pas,
> Muses, ce sont des noms fameux dans nos climats,
> Chefs de la Propagande, ardens missionaires,
> Parlant de Romantique, et prêchant ses mystères.'

It is elsewhere recorded of him, that, besides talking well himself, he contributed largely to the social pleasures of the circles in which he mixed, by leading others to talk, and by bringing persons of congenial minds together.

'A party of eight or ten agreeable persons,' he writes, 'where the conversation is gay and anecdotic, and where weak punch is handed round at half-past twelve, is the place in the world where I enjoy myself most. There, in my element, I infinitely prefer hearing others talk to talking myself. I readily sink back into the silence of happiness; and if I talk, it is only to pay my ticket of admission.'

He named half-past twelve at night because the steady, regular, formal people are wont to retire before that time, and the field is pretty sure to be left free to those who live for intellectual intercourse, and love it for its own sake, instead of hurrying to crowd after crowd to proclaim their importance, gratify their vanity, or parade their tiresomeness. He insisted on anecdotes, facts, and incidents, in contradistinction to the vague,

the declamatory, and the abstract style of conversation,—that trick of phrasemaking, as he termed it, which (in common with Byron) he detected and detested in 'Corinne.' Madame Pasta happening to say one evening of love, 'C'est une tuile qui vous tombe sur la tête;' 'Add,' said Beyle, '"comme vous passez dans la vie," and then you will speak like Madame de Staël, and people will pay attention to your remark.'

In an existence like Beyle's, as in a Rembrandt picture, the bright parts are broadly contrasted by the surrounding intensity of shade. 'My sensibility,' he writes, shortly before his death, has become too acute. What does but graze others, wounds me to the quick. Such was I in 1799; such I am still in 1840. But I have learnt to hide all this under irony imperceptible to the common herd.' In the midst of his social triumphs, he more than once meditated suicide; and on one occasion, in 1828, he appears to have been driven to despair by the remissness of an English publisher, who had omitted to pay him for some articles which he had contributed to a London magazine. Under these circumstances, we can hardly wonder that the prospect of an independence induced him to accept the consulship of Trieste, which was obtained for him, in September 1830, by the friends who had thriven on the revolution of July.

They have been censured for not doing more for him; but it should be remembered that a party is a combination of persons who unite their talents and resources upon an understanding that, in case of success, the power and patronage thereby acquired shall be

shared amongst them. There is nothing necessarily wrong in such a league, because those forming it may fairly claim credit for confidence in one another's honesty and capacity as well as for having fixed principles of policy to carry out; and the leaders have no right to gratify their private feelings at the expense of their supporters. Now Beyle took no part in the proceedings which resulted in the temporary establishment of the Orleans dynasty upon the throne. He had encountered no danger, and was entitled to no reward. Nay, he had just before been in confidential communication with the Polignac ministry on the delicate subject of the Roman Conclave. He had made himself extremely useful, and was naturally looking forward to his reward from them. So far as his influence went, it had been exerted to depreciate and discourage the exertions of the Liberal party. 'France,' he had said some time before, 'is on the high road to happiness. If they try to make her take the short cuts, they will upset the coach.' The remark was prophetic, and does credit to his penetration.

He was supremely miserable at Trieste, and, fortunately for him, Prince Metternich refused to sanction the appointment; so he was transferred to Civita Vecchia, which was an improvement, as admitting of frequent excursions to Rome. But his letters are as full as ever of longings for Parisian life.

'What a perspective,' he exclaims, 'not to see the intellectual people of Paris more than two or three times before I die! I was at a charming dinner yesterday, the finest place in the neighbourhood,—trees, a fresh breeze, and thirty-

three guests, who felt honoured by the presence of a consul; but not an idea, not a touch of depth or refinement. Am I destined to die surrounded by *bêtes*? It looks very like it. I am sought after; I enjoy some consideration; *I have the best slice of a fish weighing fourteen pounds, the best of its kind.* I had an excellent horse, which did the five miles and a half in three-quarters of an hour, yet I am perishing of ennui. How many cold characters, how many geometricians, would be happy, or, at least, tranquil and satisfied, in my place! But my soul is a fire, which dies out if it does not flame up. *I require three or four cubic feet of new ideas per day, as a steam-boat requires coal.*'

The utmost indulgence he could obtain was leave of absence, purchased by the sacrifice of half his salary, from 1836 to 1839. In 1838 he came to London, and (according to M. Colomb) struck up a passing intimacy with Theodore Hook at the Athenæum Club. In March, 1839, on the retirement of M. Molé from the Presidency of the Council and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Beyle reluctantly resumed his official duties at Civita Vecchia. His health began to break, and he returned to Paris for medical advice in 1841. On the 22nd of March, 1842, he was struck with apoplexy in the Rue Neuve des Capucins, close to the door of the Foreign Office. He was carried to his lodging in the Rue Neuve des Petits Champs, where he expired at two o'clock the next morning, without having uttered a word, and apparently without pain, in the sixtieth year of his age. He was buried in the Cemetery of Montmartre (du Nord), and the following inscription was placed by his own express directions upon his monument: 'Arrigo Beyle, Milanese, Scrisse, Amò, Visse.

Ann. 59. M. 2. Morì 2. 23. Marzo, M.D.CCC.XLII. (Henry Beyle, Milanese, Wrote, Loved, Lived. 59 years and 2 months. He died at two A.M. on the 23rd March, 1842.)'

According to Beyle's own philosophical creed, which referred everything to self, he wrote, and loved, and lived in vain; for his writings were unprofitable, his loves were unprosperous, and his life was an unhappy one. It will not be uninstructive, nor beside the purpose, to trace and analyse the more recondite causes of these results.

Miss Edgeworth wrote the story of 'Murad the Unlucky,' to prove that what is popularly called ill-luck is simply another name for imprudence, and that we have commonly ourselves to thank for our success or ill-success in life. Beyle's career might be plausibly adduced either for or against her argument. It was undeniably ill-luck that two dynasties should be successively upset just as he had established a claim on each respectively. His acknowledged merits very far exceeded those of many by whom he was distanced in the race; and on five or six occasions he strikingly distinguished himself, yet his good hits did little or nothing for his advancement. Fortune, therefore, clearly had something to do with his disappointments; yet we are disposed to think that his avowed incapacity for biding his time was the main cause of most of them. In the worldly struggle, passive endurance is no less useful than active energy; and patience under annoyance, or perseverance in uncongenial employments, has again and again proved ambition's best ladder. Beyle

was the most impatient and least tolerant of human beings. Whenever an occupation ceased to interest him, he abandoned it; the moment his acquaintance failed to amuse, he fled from them. He deemed ennui the greatest of earthly evils, and a bore the worst of criminals.

Armed with medical and legal authorities to the effect that death might be produced by ennui, and that the means by which it was illegally inflicted were immaterial in a judicial point of view, the Duc de Laraguais formally prosecuted a famous Parisian bore for an attempt upon his life. If Beyle had been the judge, he would have broken the accused upon the wheel without mercy or compunction. He was not wholly without excuse, for, when suffering from ennui, he underwent a complete prostration of the moral and physical faculties.

Another of his confirmed antipathies, if more excusable, was not less formidable as an obstacle or dangerous as a stumbling-block.

'Three or four times,' he writes, in his fifty-sixth year, 'fortune has knocked at my door. In 1814 it only rested with myself to be named Prefect of Mans, or Director-general of Corn Imports at Paris under the orders of Count Beugnot; but I was frightened at the number of platitudes and half-meannesses imposed daily on the public functionaries of all classes. . . . When I see a man strutting about in a room with a number of orders at his buttonhole, I involuntarily reckon up the number of paltry actions, of degrading submissions, and often of black treasons, that he must have accumulated to have received so many certificates of them.'

This may recal Selwyn's remark on a silver dinner

service, at the sale of the effects of Mr. Pelham, the Minister: 'How many toads have been eaten off these plates!'

Beyle rivalled or outdid Swift in his 'hate of folly' and his 'scorn of fools,' and took no pains to conceal his aversion or contempt. At the same time (like Sydney Smith with his 'foolometer') he fully appreciated the importance of this very numerous and very influential corporation. Thus, when maintaining the cause of the Romantic School against the Classicists, he says:

'Never, in the memory of historians, did nation undergo in its manners and its pleasures a more rapid and entire change than that from 1780 to 1823, and people wish to give us the same literature! Let our grave adversaries look round them; the fool (*sot*) of 1780 produced stupid and insipid pleasantries; he was always laughing; the fool of 1823 produces philosophic reasonings,—vague, hackneyed, sleep-inspiring; his face is constantly elongated. Here is a notable revolution. A society in which an element so essential and so abundant as the fool is changed to this extent, cannot support either the same comic or the same pathetic: then everybody aimed at making his neighbour laugh; now everybody wishes to pick his neighbour's pocket.'

We have already quoted his confession of an incurable tendency to produce enmity by his sarcasms. A man who habitually indulges in this mode of talking and writing may be esteemed for his manly spirit, his independent bearing, his moral and physical courage, or his uncompromising integrity, but he will rarely succeed as a place-hunter.

Beyle's irreligion is not offensively paraded in the works published under his own eye in his lifetime; but the state of his mind in this respect is imprudently exhibited in three or four passages of the 'Correspondance Inédite.' His friend Mérimée describes him as a confirmed infidel and an 'outrageous materialist;' nor, after fully allowing for his reckless habit of making himself appear worse than he was to shock grave people, can it be doubted that his entire mind and character were underlaid and pervaded by an ingrained and ineradicable system of disbelief. In the pride of his logic, he fearlessly pushed his creed, or no-creed, to its extreme consequences. Denying Providence, he denied moral responsibility: and he regarded human beings as puppets, meant for nothing higher or better than to play a sorry or ridiculous part on the stage of life, where all their motions are regulated by the strings of egotism. According to Mérimée, he could never be persuaded that what he thought false, could be deemed credible by others; and he put no faith in the sincerity of the devout. This extent of scepticism, assuming it to be genuine, seems utterly irreconcilable with his proved strength of understanding, his varied commerce with the world, and his acknowledged sagacity. To borrow the language which would have been best adapted to his apprehension, it was worse than a crime, it was a blunder. His assumed skill in penetrating to the springs of human action and his boasted logic, one or both of them, were at fault; and we need look no farther for the explanation of his disappointments or his despondency.

He is admitted on all hands to have been a man of strict honour and scrupulous integrity. M. Colomb adds, that few have had more devoted friends than Beyle, although he was culpably prone to neglect their interests as well as his own. This raises a fresh difficulty; for, generally speaking, no bad quality or vice carries its appropriate punishment along with it more surely than heartlessness. If we do not trust others, they will not trust us; and if we have no faith in friendship, we neither deserve nor acquire friends. What is worse, we forfeit our best source of consolation when we throw away hope; and we canker happiness in the bud when we kill enthusiasm:

> 'Like following life in creatures we dissect,
> We lose it in the moment we detect.'

In one of Beyle's letters he speaks of himself as simultaneously conscious of two states of being,—the sentient and the observant or reasoning; and we can fancy him like the hero in 'Used Up' (*L'Homme Blasé*), who, in momentary expectation of a strong excitement, takes out his watch to count the beatings of his pulse. This constant practice of mental analysis may refine the perceptive powers, sharpen the logical faculty, or supply materials for psychological study, but it chills the imagination, and induces an undue preference for sensual pleasures as the most solid or the least evanescent sources of enjoyment. Such was one of its effects on Beyle, who combined pruriency of fancy with delicacy of thought, and (no very rare occurrence) was at the same time sentimental and what the late Lord

Ponsonby used to call *flesh*imental. Another of its effects, not less marked, was to inspire him with a morbid dislike to verse, although he showed admirable discrimination in selecting beautiful passages from Shakspeare and Dante.

The reader will have observed that the combination of qualities which we have described in Beyle, belongs rather to the analytical than to the creative order of mind, and entitles their possessor to rank higher as a critic or metaphysician than as a writer of fiction. It is the very essence of sound criticism to trace impressions to their source; but the poet, the dramatist, and the novelist (or writer of the prose epic) must be swept along by the glowing stream of their own composition, or the public will look on indifferently or not notice them at all. In the case of the author before us, precisely what we should have anticipated from *à priori* reasoning, has come to pass. The only works of his which acquired any share of popularity on their first appearance were 'Rome, Naples, and Florence' (1817); 'Racine et Shakspeare' (1823); and the 'Life of Rossini' (1823). Beyle was passionately fond of music. When he wrote on it, he was hurried away by his subject; and the first of these three works may be described as a musical tour. The 'Life of Rossini' speaks for itself; and 'Racine and Shakspeare' was an exclusively critical production, thrown off upon a sudden impulse in the height of an exciting controversy. Such an occasion was eminently favourable to the display of his peculiar talents; and he was saved, in his own despite, from the fatal error of writing, or affecting to write, for

a contemporary public of exceedingly narrow dimensions, or for a larger one that was to begin studying him in right earnest, and in a becoming spirit, about 1880.

It is stated in an English book of travels (by the writer), printed for private circulation, that Manzoni, 'half in earnest, avowed it to be his creed, that as society became more enlightened, it would tolerate no such thing as literature considered merely as a creation of art.' Beyle too frequently acted on the hypothesis that this stage of progressive improvement had been reached already, or was sure to be reached very shortly; for he takes little pains to develope, or even to separate, his ideas, thoughts, and images, when they crowd upon him. When the expression is irreproachable in respect of clearness, the odds are that the arrangement is faulty, or that the form is such as to create an inadequate impression of the work. We do not remember another instance in which so much curious information and masterly criticism, so much varied and valuable matter of all sorts, is presented in so loose, scattered, unpretending, and unattractive a shape as in his 'Promenades dans Rome.' His friends allege that it was his dislike of Madame de Staël, and his horror of what he thought the sickly sentimentalities and pompous platitudes of 'Corinne,' that hurried him into the opposite extreme of putting forth two volumes of Notes.

'Whatever negligence may be found in his works,' says M. Mérimée, 'these were not the less laboriously worked up. All his books were copied several times before being delivered to the printer; but his correc-

tions were not of style. He always wrote fast, changing his thought, and troubling himself little about the form. He had even a contempt for style, and maintained that an author had attained perfection when readers remembered his ideas without being able to recal his phrases.' Just so it has been observed that the best dressed person is one who leaves a general impression of ease and elegance; or, as Brummell put it, if John Bull stops to look at you, you are not well dressed, but too stiff, too tight, or too fashionable. M. Thiers, again, in the eloquent Preface to his concluding volumes, compares a perfect style to glass, which we look through without being conscious of its presence between the object and the eye. These respective points of excellence, however, are not attained when the dress conveys an impression of awkwardness, when the glass troubles the view, or when the style repels readers and degrades, instead of elevating, the thought.

Nor are they often attained without labour; and it has been pointedly observed that the 'Ramblers' of Dr. Johnson, elaborate as they appear, were written rapidly and seldom underwent revision; whilst the simple language of Rousseau, which seems to come flowing from the heart, was the slow production of painful toil, pausing on every word, and balancing every sentence. Balzac concludes his fervent eulogy of Beyle by protesting against his 'habitudes de sphinx;' and says of the style of his best work, 'he writes very much in the style of Diderot, who was not a writer; but the conception is grand and powerful, the thought is original, and often well-rendered. This system is not to

be held up to imitation. It would be too dangerous to let authors believe themselves profound thinkers.' It would certainly be too dangerous to let them set up for so many Benthams, and depend upon a corresponding supply of Dumonts to translate or interpret them.

In a letter to M. Colomb, Balzac adds: 'Beyle is one of the most remarkable spirits of the age; but he has not paid sufficient attention to form: he wrote as the birds sing, and our language is a sort of Madame Honesta, who finds no good in anything that is not irreproachable. I am deeply grieved at his sudden death; the pruning-knife should have been carried into the "Chartreuse de Parme," and a second edition would have made a complete and irreproachable work of it. In any case it is a wonderful production, *le livre des esprits distingués*.'

We concur with M. Balzac to the extent of thinking the 'Chartreuse de Parme' a very remarkable book, which may be fairly taken as Beyle's masterpiece in the department of fiction. We shall, therefore, endeavour to convey some notion of it by a rude outline of the plot and a few extracts.

The time is the first quarter of the present century. The scene is laid at Milan and Parma. The heroine (Gina, the abbreviation of Angelina) is a Milanese of high birth, surpassing beauty, indomitable energy, and morals of that elastic and accommodating order that never stand in the way of her preferment or her caprice. The hero Fabricio, her nephew, is a good-looking, gallant, and gifted scapegrace, a sort of Italian Tom Jones, who is constantly getting himself and his patrons into

difficulty by indulging the impulse of the moment. His aunt is attached to him with an intensity of affectionate interest that might have ended in a scandal of the worst kind, had it been reciprocated, which it is not; and she herself is represented as never wilfully cherishing an irregular or guilty wish. The most important of the *dramatis personæ*, after these two, are the reigning Prince of Parma, Ernest IV., and his prime minister, the Count Mosca della Rovere. More than a hundred pages are occupied in laying the train by details of Fabricio's youthful adventures and the early life of Gina, of which a single incident may suffice. Her husband, the Count Pietranera, having been killed in a duel, she intimates to her principal adorer her sovereign will and pleasure that he should pursue the successful combatant and revenge the death of her lost lord. He hesitates, and she sends him the following billet:

'Voulez-vous agir une fois en homme d'esprit? Figurez-vous que vous ne m'avez jamais connue. Je suis, avec un peu de mépris peut-être, votre très-humble servante,

'GINA PIETRANERA.'

Refusing the most splendid offers, she takes up her abode in a fifth story, with the avowed intention of living on a pension of 1,500 francs a year. The Count Mosca sees her at La Scala, and falls desperately in love with her. 'He was then between forty and forty-five years of age: he had marked features, no appearance of pretension, and a gay, simple air, which predisposed in his favour. He would have been very good-looking still,

if a whim of his prince had not obliged him to wear powder as a pledge of sound political opinions.' He consoles himself for the advance of years by the reflection that 'age, after all, is but the inability to give oneself up to those delicious tremblings and emotions;' and, encouraged by the Countess's smiles, he at length makes his proposals, which are not exactly what the French ladies call *pour le bon motif*. Like a late lamented English statesman, he explains that there are three courses open. He would fling ambition to the winds, and live with her at Milan, Florence, or Naples, on the wreck of his fortune; or she might settle at Parma, where he could insure her a place about the Court:

'"But," he continues, "there is one capital objection. The prince is devout, and, as you are aware, it is my fate to be married. The result would be a million of annoyances. You are a widow; it is an excellent position, which you must exchange for another, and this is the object of my third plan. A new and accommodating husband might be found. But it is essential that he should be of an advanced age, for why should you refuse me the hope of replacing him at some future day? Well, I have concluded this singular affair with the Duc Sanseverina-Taxis, who of course does not know the name of his future duchess. All he knows is that she is to make him ambassador, and confer on him a grand cross that his father had, and the want of which renders him the most miserable of mortals. Allowing for this weakness, the Duc is not too much of a simpleton. He has his clothes and perukes from Paris. He is by no means the sort of man to commit intentional depravity; he seriously believes that honour consists in having a cross; and he is ashamed of his wealth. He came to me a year ago to propose to found a hospital to gain this cross. I laughed at him, but he did

not laugh at me when I proposed a marriage; my first condition, I need hardly say, being that he should never set foot in Parma again."

'"But are you aware," interrupted the Countess, "that what you are proposing to me is very immoral?"

'"Not more immoral than what has been done in our Court and twenty others. There is this convenience in absolute power, that it sanctifies everything in the eyes of the governed; and can that which is seen by no one be a blot? Our policy, for twenty years, bids fair to consist in the fear of Jacobinism: and what a fear! Every year we shall fancy ourselves on the eve of '93. You will hear, I hope, the phrases I am in the habit of declaiming on that topic, at my receptions. They are grand. Everything that may diminish this fear a little will be supremely moral in the eyes of the noble and the devout. Now, at Parma, everything that is not noble or devout is in prison or preparing to go there; and you may be well assured that this marriage will not appear singular amongst us before the day of my disgrace."'

Three months afterwards, the new Duchess Sanseverina-Taxis was the cynosure of every eye and the observed of all observers at the Court of Parma, where the Prince, whose portrait is a masterpiece, soon seeks to displace and replace his minister. On one of her Thursday receptions, he could not resist the temptation of going in defiance of etiquette, and the following colloquy arises:

'"But if I accept your Highness's attentions," observed the Countess, laughing, "with what face should I dare to reappear before the Count?" "I should be almost as much out of countenance as you," replied his Highness. "The dear Count! my friend! But this is an embarrassment very easy to evade, and one on which I have been thinking,—the

Count would be sent to the citadel for the remainder of his days."'

She exerts her influence to make him pay a visit to his wife, an event which electrifies the Court:

'This Prince was not a wicked man, whatever the liberals of Italy may say of him. To be sure, he had thrown a good many of them into prison; but it was from fear; and he sometimes repeated, as if to console himself for certain reminiscences, that it is better to kill the devil than for the devil to kill us. The day after the *soirée* of which we have been speaking, he was in the highest spirits; he had done two good actions,—gone to the Duchess's Thursday, and spoken to his wife.'

The rivalry of their confiding master and friend a little disturbs the domestic felicity of this exemplary pair, but still their grand cause of anxiety is Fabricio; and it is at length resolved between them that the proper vocation for a young man of family, suspected of liberalism, and more than suspected of libertinism, is the Church. The young man refuses at first, but his scruples are overcome by an appeal to the example of his ancestors.

'"What a mistake!" (he had thoughts of enlisting in the army of the United States), remonstrates his aunt. "You will see no war, and you will relapse into the tavern-life, only without elegance, without music, without love. Trust me, American life would be dull work for you or me." She explained to him the worship of the god dollar, and the respect that must be shown for the workpeople in the streets, who decide everything by their votes. "Before turning yourself into a policeman in uniform, reflect well that we are not talking of your becoming a poor priest, more or less vir-

tuous and exemplary, like the Abbé Blanès (his tutor). Remember that your uncles were archbishops of Parma. Read over again the notices of their lives in the supplement to the genealogy. Above all, it becomes the bearer of an illustrious name to be *grand seigneur*, noble, generous, protector of justice, destined beforehand to find himself at the head of his order, and in all his life to be guilty of only one act of knavery, but that one very useful." '

Talleyrand (whose choice of his original profession was probably influenced by similar considerations), when Rulhières said he had been guilty of only one wickedness in his life, asked 'When will it end?' There was more in this repartee than its readiness or its point; for there are mean, wicked, and degrading actions which never do end, and which colour the entire current of a life. Fabricio, loose as he is, has a vague instinct that he is about to commit one of these, but his scruples are overcome by the Duchess, and he consents with a sigh to become a Monsignore.

The Count's parting advice to his *protégé* is not quite equal to that given by Polonius to Laertes, but it is in strict keeping with the part.

' "If we are dismissed," said the Duchess, "we will rejoin you at Naples. But since you accept, till the new order of things, the proposal of the violet stockings, the Count, who thoroughly understands Italy as it is, has charged me with an idea for you. Believe or disbelieve what you will be taught, but never raise an objection. Fancy to yourself that you are learning the rules of whist; would you raise objections to the rules of whist? I have told the Count that you are a believer, and he is glad of it; this is useful both in this world and the next. But if you believe, do not fall into

the vulgarity of speaking with horror of Voltaire, Diderot, Raynal, and all those crackbrained Frenchmen, precursors of the two Chambers. Let those names be rarely in your mouth; but when you must speak of them, speak of them with calm irony: they are people who have been refuted long since, and whose attacks are no longer of any consequence. Believe blindly whatever you are told at the Academy. Reflect that your least objections will be noted down; you will be pardoned a little intrigue of gallantry well managed, but not a doubt: *age suppresses intrigue and augments doubt.*"

'"The second idea that the Count sends you is this,—If you happen to think of a brilliant argument, a victorious repartee, which changes the course of the conversation, do not yield to the temptation of shining,—be silent; people of discernment will see your mental superiority in your eyes. It will be time enough to have *esprit* when you are a bishop."'

How far Fabricio had benefited by these instructions may be inferred from his first interview with the Prince on the completion of his Neapolitan training for the priesthood:

'"Well, Monsignor," began the Prince, "are the people of Naples happy? Is the King beloved?" "Serene Highness," replied Fabricio, without an instant's hesitation, "I admired, in passing through the streets, the excellent bearing of the soldiers of the different regiments of His Majesty; the good society of Naples is respectful towards its masters, as it ought to be, but I will fairly own that in all my life I never suffered people of the lower classes to speak to me of anything but the work for which I paid them." "*Peste!*" said the Prince to himself, "what unction! this is all in the Sanseverina style." Was it possible to repeat more closely the lessons of the aunt? I fancied I heard her speaking. If there was a revolution in my State, she would edit the

"Moniteur," like the San-Felice at Naples. But the San-Felice, despite her beauty, and her twenty-five years, was hanged; a warning to over-clever ladies.'

The Duchess narrowly escapes sharing the fate of La San-Felice. The nephew kills a man in self-defence. He is accused of murder; and henceforth the main interest of the plot turns on the struggles of the aunt to save him from his persecutors, who are secretly set on by the Prince, and to make him an archbishop in defiance of them. The most conspicuous among her adversaries is the minister of police, Rossi, and the least scrupulous of her tools is the republican enthusiast, Palla Ferrante, who robs on the highway to pay for the printing of his democratic tracts, and, whilst daily risking his life for liberty, is made the slave of an aristocratic beauty by a smile. Palla Ferrante, says Balzac, 'is the type of a family of Italian spirits, sincere but misled, full of talent but ignorant of the fatal effects of their doctrine. Send them, ye ministers of absolute princes, with plenty of money, to France (*i.e.* in 1840) and to the United States. Instead of persecuting them, let them enlighten themselves. They will soon say, like Alfieri in 1793, "The little at their work reconcile me to the great."'

We agree with the same acute critic, that the commencement should have been abridged, and that the curtain should have fallen on the death of the Prince, although the loves of Fabricio and Clelia form one of the finest satires in the book. When the following interview takes place, Fabricio is archbishop of Parma, a popular preacher, and supposed (as is the lady) to be

living in the odour of sanctity. He is admitted into an orangery, and finds himself before a barred window. A hand is extended to meet him, and a soft voice announces, *C'est moi*:

'"I have made a vow to the Madonna, as you know, never to see you; this is the reason why I receive you in this profound darkness. I wish you to understand that if ever you force me to see you in broad daylight, everything between us will be at an end. But, in the first place, I do not choose you to preach before Anetta Marini."

'"My angel, I will never preach again before anyone. I only preached in the hope of seeing you."

'"Do not speak thus; remember that it is not allowable for me to see you."

[Here we request permission to overleap a space of three years.]

'The Marchioness had a charming little boy, about two years old, Sandrino, who was always with her, or on the knees of the Marquis, her husband. During the long hours of each day when she could not see her friend, the presence of Sandrino consoled her; for we have to confess a thing which will seem odd north of the Alps, she had remained faithful to her vow; she had promised the Madonna *never to see* Fabricio; such had been her very words, consequently she never received him but at night, and there was never a light in the apartment.'

Balzac insists that the Count Mosca is meant for Prince Metternich, and that for Parma we should read Modena. Beyle denied that he had copied any living or contemporary original, male or female. He argues that his scene could not have been laid in one of the great courts on account of the details of administration. 'There remained the little princes of Germany and

Italy. But the Germans are so prostrate before a riband, they are so *bêtes*. I passed many years amongst them, and have forgotten their language from contempt. You will see that my personages could not be Germans. If you follow this idea, you will find that I have been led by the hand to an extinct dynasty, to a Farnese, the least obscure of these extincts, by reason of the General, his grandfather.' . . . 'I have never seen Madame Belgioso. Rossi was a German. I have spoken to him a hundred times. I learnt "The Prince" during my residences at St. Cloud in 1810 and 1811.'

Schiller, in 'Cabal und Liebe,' and Lessing, in 'Emilia Galotti,' have each painted a petty despot, with the resulting demoralisation of all within his sphere, in still darker colours; but they wrote before the Great Revolution of 1789, which permanently altered the tone and limited the social effects of despotism, great or small. Although oppression and corruption may be as rife as ever, and iniquitous sentences may be procured as easily in the actual Naples as in the Parma of the novelist, the modern tools and satellites of tyranny are more rogues than fools; they are no unhesitating believers in right divine; their reverence for white staves and gold sticks is founded rather on calculation than on faith; and they no longer (except a few of the very silliest) talk of themselves, even amongst themselves, as privileged to indulge their vices at the expense of the non-noble classes with impunity. We doubt whether at any time since the commencement of the nineteenth century, a clever woman, like

the Duchess, would have treated as an absurdity the notion of a del Dongo being prosecuted for killing a Giletti, or whether any Pope within living memory would have been induced to sanction Fabricio's elevation to the archbishopric. Every objection of this sort, however, might have been obviated by carrying the plot back to the period when Dubois received his cardinal's hat, or even to that when Talleyrand was made a bishop, and when a gentleman was expected to suppress the insolence of the canaille by the infliction of instant death. Thus, Edgeworth relates in his 'Memoirs,' that once when he was riding with a lady in the south of France, some coarse expressions were addressed to her, or in her hearing, by a peasant, whom Edgeworth forthwith horsewhipped and rolled into the ditch. Shortly afterwards he found himself coldly received by the aristocracy of the neighbourhood, and learnt, on inquiring the cause, that he was thought to have been wanting in proper spirit, and that it was his duty to run his sword through the fellow's body on the spot.

In the 'Promenades dans Rome,' and in the 'Correspondance Inédite,' may be found authentic examples, by the dozen, of crimes committed under the influence of jealousy, in which the criminal invariably had public opinion on his side. Beyle's experience of Italian society, as it existed in the first quarter of the present century, if it does not so exist still, had satisfied him that in Italy no offences against good feeling and morality were so unnatural as to lie altogether beyond the bounds of probability; and he constructed this singular tale from examples which had doubtless passed before his eyes. But

he has caricatured Italian depravity. Although parallels should be found for every individual act of villany, meanness, or immorality, there is no getting over the improbability or the repulsiveness of the universal corruption of the *dramatis personæ* as a whole. Not one of them has the smallest consciousness of a principle, or of a well-defined difference between right and wrong. The best, or (more correctly speaking) the least bad, are mere creatures of impulse; and it may fairly be made a question whether such a society could have been held together under such a government, even with a friendly and powerful despot to prop it up. In fact, Beyle seems to have invented a race of men and women to square with his own theory of materialism, and to have shaped his story with an exclusive view to their idiosyncrasy. Much ingenuity has been displayed in contriving forced scenes for the development of their peculiarities, whilst strokes of refined irony, witty remarks, and clever sketches are found in sufficient number to give a tempting flavour to the book; but the plot drags and bewilders, and the characters inspire no interest, because they want vitality, and because (like Swift's Yahoos) they are an outrage on nature and on truth. The intended moral of the book is thus stated by the author:

'From all this, the moral to be drawn is, that the man who approaches the court, compromises his happiness, if he be happy, and in every case makes his future destiny depend on the intrigues of a *femme de chambre*. On the other side, in America, in the republic, one must bore oneself all day long with paying serious court to the shopkeepers of the

street, and become as stupid as themselves; and there, no opera!'

In the concluding sentence spoke the true genius, the mocking, penetrating, and Epicurean spirit of the man.

It is one of the common whims or tricks of Fame to reward the pioneers and champions of progress in an inverse ratio to their deserts. When their victory over error or prejudice is complete, the struggle is speedily forgotten, and their services, sometimes their very names, are forgotten too. The rising generation, who have been wont to regard the presence of Victor Hugo and Scribe among the illustrious Forty as a thing of course, and who have crowded to the Français to see Rachel in 'Angelo' or 'Adrienne Lecouvreur,' will find it difficult to believe that, within living memory, the arm-chairs of the Academy would have been deemed desecrated by such occupants and the national theatre profaned by such performances. But the fact was so, and the complete change which public opinion in France has undergone on this class of subjects is owing in no slight degree to Beyle, who, in the first grand assault on classicism, led the forlorn hope.

Mérimée awards him the honour of having, so to speak, discovered Italian music for the Parisian amateurs. Sainte-Beuve, another high authority, says that Beyle, after having smoothed the way for the due appreciation of Cimarosa, Mozart, and Rossini by the French, was equally successful in clearing the horizon for the brilliant galaxy of writers who, during the last

quarter of a century, have formed the pride and ornament of literature in France. When he came to the rescue, the Romanticists were outnumbered and hard-pressed. Whoever dared to transgress the unities of time and place, or to depart in the slightest degree from the prescriptive standards of orthodoxy in language, morals, manners, or dramatic action, was hooted down or proscribed; whilst the Academicians, forming a compact body of literary policemen, and backed by the most influential journals, stood prepared to enforce or execute the decree. Their ground was every way untenable, and they were soon thrown into confusion by the logic, sarcasms, and well-applied anecdotes of Beyle. At this distance of time from the controversy, a bare statement of the question will be enough.

'Romanticism,' says Beyle, 'is the art of presenting a people with the literary works which, in the actual condition of their habits and modes of faith, are capable of affording them the greatest possible amount of pleasure. Classicism, on the contrary, presents them with the literature which afforded the very greatest possible amount of pleasure to their great-grandfathers.'

The 'Correspondance Inédite,' on which we have already drawn largely for our biographical sketch, contains numerous specimens of criticism, observation, and description which go far towards justifying the estimate of the writer's intimate friends when they pronounce him to be better than his books. Unluckily, most of his letters, like his controversial writings, relate to bygone topics, or to publications which have fallen into oblivion or quietly settled down into their proper places,

and either way have ceased to inspire interest enough to give zest to a commentary.

Beyle's 'History of Painting in Italy,' which he transcribed seventeen times, fell still-born. His essay 'De L'Amour,' as we are candidly informed in the preface to the new edition, shared the same fate. He told Madame Ancelot that the publisher, after waiting five years without selling a copy, sold the entire impression for ballast. Yet, despite his paradoxes and caprices, he must have been a very entertaining and instructive cicerone; and, too frequently imbedded in masses of broken thought and incomplete theory, more than one specimen of his happiest manner will be found in this neglected volume upon Love. Take, for example, the introductory part of the story, entitled 'Le Rameau de Salzbourg.'

'At the mines of Hallein, near Salzbourg, the miners throw into the pits that have been abandoned a bough stripped of its leaves: two or three months afterwards they find it entirely covered with brilliant crystallisations. The smallest branches, those which are not larger than the claw of a titmouse, are incrusted with an infinity of little glancing and glittering crystals. The primitive bough is no longer to be recognised. The miners never fail, when the sun is bright and the air perfectly dry, to offer these branches of diamonds to the travellers who are about to descend into the mine.'

We omit the description of the party with whom the author visited these mines. All that it is necessary to know is, that one of his companions was a beautiful Italian.

'During our preparations for the descent, which were long, I amused myself with observing what was passing in the head of a good-looking fair-complexioned Bavarian officer of hussars, who although very handsome, had nothing of the coxcomb about him, and on the contrary appeared to be an *homme d'esprit*; it was Madame Gherardi (familiarly called the Ghita) who made the discovery. I saw him falling in love at first sight with the charming Italian, who was beside herself with pleasure at the thought of our soon finding ourselves five hundred feet underground, and was a thousand miles from the thought of making conquests. Before long I was astonished at the strange confidences which the officer made to me unconsciously. I warned Madame Gherardi, who, but for me, would have lost this spectacle to which perhaps a young woman is never insensible. What struck me most was the shade of insanity which unceasingly increased in his reflections. He kept finding in this woman perfections more and more invisible to my eyes. Every moment what he said painted with less resemblance the woman he was beginning to love. I said to myself, the Ghita cannot be the cause of all the transports of this poor German. For example, he began praising her hand, which had been affected in a singular manner by the small-pox, and had remained very pitted and very brown.

'How to explain what I see? said I to myself. Where find a comparison to elucidate my thought? At this moment, Madame Gherardi was playing with the branch covered with crystals which the miners had just given her. There was a bright sunshine: it was the third of August, and the little saline prisms shone as brilliantly as the finest diamonds in a well-lighted ball-room. . . . I told the Ghita, "The effect produced upon this young man by the nobleness of your Italian features, by those eyes such as he never saw before, is precisely similar to that which the crystallisation has produced on the little branch which you hold in your

hand and think so pretty. Stripped of its leaves by the winter, it was surely nothing less than dazzling. The crystallisation of the salt has covered the blackened bough with these diamonds, so brilliant and so numerous, that except in a few places we can no longer see the branches as they are."

'"Well, and what is your conclusion?" said Madame Gherardi. "That this bough," I replied, "faithfully represents the Ghita, such as she is seen in the imagination of this young officer."

'"That is to say, that you perceive as much difference between what I am in reality and the manner in which this amiable young man regards me, as between a little branch of dried elm and the pretty *aigrette* of diamonds which these miners have presented to me!"

'"Madame, the young officer discovers in you qualities that we, your old friends, have never seen. For example, we should never perceive an air of tender and compassionate *bonté*. As this young man is a German, the first quality of a woman in his eyes is *bonté*, and forthwith he reads the expression of it in your face. If he was an Englishman, he would endow you with the aristocratic and 'lady-like' air of a duchess; but if he were I, he would see you such as you are, because for many a day, and to my misfortune, I can imagine nothing more fascinating."'

The thought may have occurred to others, as when Congreve's Mirabel says to Millamant—'You are no longer handsome when you have lost your lover; your beauty dies upon the instant: for beauty is the lover's gift; 'tis he bestows your charms; your glass is all a cheat.' But the theory was never so fully developed, or so gracefully expressed, and Beyle's carelessness, as well as his unreasonableness, in complaining of not being understood, may be estimated from the fact

that this story, which is the key-note of the book, was discovered amongst his papers, and first appeared in the posthumous edition. He has an odd theory to account for the alleged insensibility of English-women:

'In England the wealthy classes, tired of staying at home, and under pretext of necessary exercise, complete their three or four leagues a day, as if man were created and placed on the globe to trot. In this manner they consume the nervous fluid by the legs and not by the heart. After which, forsooth, they presume to talk of feminine delicacy, and to despise Spain and Italy. Nothing, on the contrary, can be more free from occupation than the young Italians; the motion which would deprive them of their sensibility is disagreeable to them. They may walk half a league occasionally as a painful security for health: as to the women, a Roman beauty does not take in a year as much exercise as a young *miss* in a week.'

Beyle might have learnt that a young *miss* exercises her mind as well as her body; and it is a strange perversity of morals to claim the palm of 'feminine delicacy' for women, who (if we may trust their eulogist) are trained to become languishing or capricious mistresses instead of faithful wives or intellectual companions, and taught that intrigue, not duty, is and ought to be the chief business and grand object of their lives. We shall conclude our extracts with an anecdote and a shrewd remark:

'Ought not the true pride of a woman to be placed in the energy of the sentiment she inspires? The courtiers of Francis the First were joking one of the queen-mother's maids of honour about the inconstancy of her lover, who, they said,

had no real love for her. A short time afterwards this lover was taken ill, and reappeared at court dumb. One day, at the end of three years, when the same persons were expressing their astonishment at her loving him still, she said to him, "Speak!" and he spoke.

'It not unfrequently happens that a clever man, in paying court to a woman, has done no more than make her think of love, and predispose her heart. She encourages this clever man who gives her this pleasure. He conceives hopes. One fine day this woman meets the man who makes her feel what the other has described.'

It is a redeeming feature in Beyle's character, to be set against a host of errors, that, in what he terms his affairs of the heart, he was remarkable for the delicacy and depth of his feelings, and the constancy of his attachment. 'There was one woman,' says Mérimée, 'whose name he could never pronounce without trepidation in his voice. In 1836 (he was then fifty-three) he spoke to me of his love with profound emotion. An affection, which dated very far back, was no longer returned. His mistress was growing reasonable, and he was as madly in love as at twenty. "How can you still love me?" she asked; "I am forty-five." "In my eyes," said Beyle, "she is as young as when we first met." Then, with that spirit of observation which never left him, he detailed all the little symptoms of growing indifference that he had remarked. "After all," he said, "her conduct is rational. She was fond of whist. She is fond of it no longer: so much the worse for me if I am still fond of whist. She is of a country where ridicule is the greatest of evils. To love at her age is ridiculous. During eighteen months

she has risked this evil for my sake. This makes eighteen months of happiness that I have stolen from her."'

Beyle, always too stout for elegance, grew corpulent as he advanced in years, and his portrait, as sketched by his friend M. Colomb, does not convey the impression of an *homme aux bonnes fortunes*. But his brow was fine, his eye lively and penetrating, his mouth expressive, and his hand cast in so fine a mould that a celebrated sculptor applied for permission to take a cast of it for a statue of Mirabeau.

The utmost space we feel justified in devoting to this remarkable man is exhausted, and we cannot now notice any other of his works. We will merely add one observation which is equally applicable to all of them. They belong pre-eminently to what he calls the class of insolent works, which require and compel readers to think; and if (as many apprehend) the prevalent fashion for cheap reprints should end by deteriorating literature and lowering the popular taste, there will be some comfort in reflecting that it has occasionally rescued from unmerited neglect the name and writings of a man of thought, observation, and sensibility, like Beyle.

ALEXANDER DUMAS.

[FROM THE QUARTERLY REVIEW FOR JULY, 1871.]

1. *Mémoires d'Alexandre Dumas.* Tomes 16.
2. *Mémoires d'Alexandre Dumas.* Deuxième Série. Tomes 8.

BACON never gave stronger proof of his knowledge of mankind than when he left his 'name and memory to foreign nations and the next ages.' A whole host of proverbs might be cited in justification of this bequest; and Lord Russell has felicitously described a proverb as the wisdom of many and the wit of one. 'No man is a prophet in his own country.' 'No man is a hero to his valet de chambre.' 'Familiarity breeds contempt.' What are these but so many variations of the same familiar tune, so many modes of expressing the same universally recognised truth, that it is vain to hope for a just and fair appreciation from our contemporaries. We may be unduly exalted as well as unduly lowered by them, for a brief period or for a set purpose; but that they should hold the scales even, and pronounce impartially on the merits or demerits of a living rival or associate, would seem to border on a moral impossibility. In conversation with James Smith, Crabbe expressed

great astonishment at his own popularity in London, adding, 'In my own village they think nothing of me.' If people cannot bring themselves to contemplate as a real genius the quiet unobtrusive character whom they see moving amongst them like any other ordinary mortal, how can they be expected to recognise, as a duly qualified candidate for the character, one who is mixed up in a succession of literary or party intrigues and contests, who is alternately wounding their prejudices or flattering their self-love, whose fame or notoriety resembles the shuttlecock, which is only kept from falling by being struck from side to side in rivalry.

In England, of late years, political acrimony has been nearly banished from the higher regions of criticism; but an infinity of disturbing forces have been unceasingly at work to prevent the fair estimate of a popular writer in France, and there never was a popular writer who had better reason than Alexander Dumas to protest against the contemporary judgment of his countrymen, or to appeal, like Bacon, to foreign nations and the next ages. This could hardly have been his own opinion when he commenced the publication of his autobiography, which was far from mitigating the spirit of detraction he had provoked; but his death may be accepted as an atonement for his manifold offences; and the most cursory glance at his career will show that its irregularities were indissolubly connected with its brilliancy. It was an adventurous one, in every sense of the term. From its commencement to its close he threw reflection overboard and cast prudence to the winds. He is one

of the most remarkable examples of fearless self-reliance, restless activity, and sustained exertion, we ever read or heard of. His resources of all sorts, mental and bodily, proved inexhaustible till six months before his death, although he had been drawing upon them from early youth with reckless prodigality. Amongst his many *tours de force* was the composition of a complete five-act drama within eight days, and the editorship of a daily journal, *Le Mousquetaire*, upon a distinct understanding with his subscribers, faithfully observed, that the contents should be supplied by his pen. It was towards the end of the second month of the satisfactory performance of this task that he received the following letter:

'My dear Dumas,

'You have been informed that I have become one of your subscribers (*abonnés*), and you ask my opinion of your journal. I have an opinion on human things: I have none on miracles: you are superhuman. My opinion of you! It is a note of exclamation! People have tried to discover perpetual motion. You have done better: you have created perpetual astonishment. Adieu! live! in other words, write! I am there to read.

'Lamartine.

'*Paris*, 20*th December*, 1853.'

He set up a theatre—*Le Théâtre historique*—for the representation of his own plays, as he set up a journal for his own contributions. He has not written quite as many plays as Lope de Vega, but he has written four times as many romances as the author of 'Waverley;' and he has done quite enough in both walks to confute

the theory that a successful dramatist must necessarily fail as a novelist, and *vice versâ*. Postponing for a moment the questions of morality and originality, it can no longer be denied in any quarter that Dumas's influence, whether for good or evil, has been immense on both sides of the Channel. Indeed, we are by no means sure that his romances have not been more read by the higher class in this country than in his own. Nor, in glancing over his multifarious claims to rank amongst the leading spirits of his age, must we forget his numerous 'Voyages' and 'Impressions de Voyages,' constituting altogether between twenty and thirty most amusing and instructive volumes of travels. But they are wholly unlike what are commonly called Travels, and constitute an entirely new style of writing. He has a prodigious memory, filled to overflowing with the genuine romance of history: he lights instinctively upon every local tradition that is worth recording: he has a quick eye for the picturesque and (above all) an exquisite perception of the humorous. He is about the best possible storyteller in print, and he rarely dwells too long on a ludicrous incident, nor forces us to keep company with his laughable characters till they grow wearisome.

The wonder at his unprecedented fertility and versatility had led at one time to a very general belief that most of his publications were concocted by a set of 'prentice hands, or journeymen, whom he paid at so much a sheet; and that the utmost he contributed to their handiwork was a masterly touch here and there, and his name on the title-page. One of these, named

Macquet, boldly laid claim to a lion's share in the composition of the best, and was strenuously supported by critics of authority.[1] But Macquet was avowedly employed by Dumas for twenty years to hunt up subjects, supply accessories, or do for him what eminent portrait painters are wont to leave to pupils, namely, the preparation of the canvas, the mixing of the colours, the rough outline of the figures, or the drapery. That Macquet was capable of nothing better or higher, was proved by his utter failure as a novelist, whenever, both before and after the alleged partnership, he set up for himself.

A curious attempt was then made to show by calculation that the number of pages which Dumas, according to his own account, must have composed during his literary life, was more than the most practised penman could have copied in the same space of time at the rate of sixty pages a day. But as his literary life lasted more than forty years, the required quantity per day is quadrupled or quintupled in this estimate; and the production of twelve or fourteen widely-printed pages, on the average, for a series of years is by no means a physical impossibility. This rate of composition was often exceeded by Sir Walter

[1] *Fabrique de Romans: Maison Dumas et Compagnie.* Par Eugène de Mirecourt. Paris, 1845. *Les Supercheries littéraires dévoilées.* Par J. M. Quérard. Troisième edition. Paris, 1859. Article 'Dumas' (Alexandre Davy). This article, containing 152 pages of close print in double columns, is a collection of all the criticisms and attacks, founded or unfounded, ever levelled against Dumas; and although invaluable as a fund of information, it carries little weight as an authority by reason of its obvious exaggeration and injustice.

Scott, who wrote or dictated the 'Bride of Lammermoor' while suffering from cramp in the stomach to an extent that often compelled him to break off and throw himself on a sofa to writhe in agony. Lope de Vega is known to have written five full-length dramas in fifteen days, and his dramatic compositions, published or unpublished, have been computed to exceed two thousand.[1] Edgeworth states, in his 'Memoirs,' as an ascertained fact on which heavy bets were laid and won, that a man could run faster with a carriage-wheel, which he propelled with the bare hand as a child trundles a hoop, than when he was entirely unencumbered, provided the prescribed distance were sufficient for the *impetus* or adventitious motion thus acquired to tell. This sounds more paradoxical and open to doubt than a statement made in our hearing by Dumas, that, when he warmed to his work, he could supply original matter faster than it could be transcribed by the readiest penman. His mode of life was thus described in the 'Siècle':

'He rises at six: before him are laid thirty-five sheets of paper of the largest size; he takes up his pen and writes in a hand that M. de Saint-Omer would envy, till eleven. At eleven he breakfasts, always in company: the author of "Monte Christo" is the most hospitable of men of letters; during this meal, in which he plays a good knife and fork, his spirits and his wit never flag. At twelve he resumes the pen, not to quit it again till six in the evening. The dinner finds him what he was in the morning, as lively, as light-hearted, as ready at repartee. If by chance he has not filled the allotted number of sheets, a momentary shade

[1] Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature*, vol. ii. p. 204.

passes over his face, he steals away, and returns two or three hours later to enjoy the pleasures of the *soirée*. The year has three hundred and sixty-five days: we have described three hundred and sixty-five days of the famous novelist and dramatist.'

We have now before us (received from Dumas) the original manuscript of a chapter of the 'Mémoires d'un Médecin,' obviously dashed off at a heat. The handwriting is large, round, and free, bearing a superficial resemblance to that of Scott.

The charge of plagiarism is one easily brought, and not easily parried except by showing that there is nothing new under the sun, and that the most inventive minds have not disdained to borrow from their predecessors. Virgil borrowed from Homer: Racine, from Euripides: Corneille (for his Cid), from a Spanish dramatist. '*Je prends mon bien où je le trouve*,' was the unabashed avowal of Molière. Shakspeare drew largely on chronicles, popular histories, and story-books for his characters and plots: his Greeks and Romans frequently speak the very words placed in their mouth by Plutarch: 'Julius Cæsar' was preceded by a Latin play on the same subject, and (amongst other things) the famous *Et tu, Brute?* was taken from it. Voltaire sedulously ran down Shakspeare, to throw dust in the eyes of the French public and prevent them from discovering his obligations to the barbarian, as they designated the author of 'Hamlet.' 'L'Ermite' in 'Zadig' is a mere paraphrase of Parnell's poem; and the fable (Voltaire's) of 'Le Lion et le Marseillais' is borrowed from Mandeville. The framework and all the solid

portions of Mirabeau's best speeches were notoriously supplied by Dumont; little being left for the orator but to infuse the Promethean fire and vivify the mass.

There is extant a note in the handwriting of Talleyrand's brother to the effect that the only breviary used by the ex-bishop was 'L'Improvisateur français,' a voluminous collection of anecdotes and jests; the fraternal inference being that his conversational brilliancy was partly owing to this repository. Pascal copies whole pages from Montaigne without quoting him. Sheridan confessedly acted on Molière's principle or no-principle: he was indebted to Farquhar for the 'Trip to Scarborough:' the most admired bit of dialogue between Joseph Surface and Lady Teazle is the recast of a fine reflection in 'Zadig;'[1] and, consciously or unconsciously, Tom Jones and Blifil must have influenced the conception of Charles and Joseph Surface. 'With regard to the charges about the shipwreck,' wrote Lord Byron to Mr. Murray, 'I think that I told you and Mr. Hobhouse years ago that there was not a single circumstance of it not taken from fact; not, indeed, from any single shipwreck, but all from actual facts of different shipwrecks.' So little was Tasso ashamed of occasional imitations of other poets or incorporated details from history, that, in his commentary on his 'Rime' he takes pains to point out all coincidences of the kind.

[1] 'Astarté est femme; elle laisse parler ses regards avec d'autant plus d'imprudence qu'elle ne se croit pas encore coupable. Malheureusement rassurée sur son innocence, elle néglige les dehors nécessaires. Je tremblerai pour elle tant qu'elle n'aura rien à se reprocher.'—*Zadig.*

Scott lays particular stress in his Preface on the fidelity with which he has followed the narratives and traditions on which his romances are almost uniformly based: but he forgot to note that the scene in 'Kenilworth' where Amy is kneeling before Leicester and asking him about his orders of knighthood, was copied from the 'Egmont' of Goethe. Balzac has appropriated for one of his novels an entire chapter of 'The Disowned.' Lamartine has been tracked to gleaning grounds, which he hoped to visit incognito, by Sainte-Beuve. Dr. Ferriar has unsparingly exposed the poaching propensities of Sterne, who, besides making free with Rabelais and Burton, has been indirectly the means of dragging more than one author from obscurity by stealing from him. Lord Brougham left a translation of Voltaire's 'Memnon, ou La Sagesse humaine' to be published as an original composition of his own; and his executors, entering fully into the spirit of the testator and carrying out his last wishes to the letter, have published it as he left it, without a hint, haply without a suspicion, of its quality.

One of the fine images with which Canning wound up his peroration of the Indemnity Bill of 1818 was certainly anticipated by Madame de Staël.[1] The embryo of Macaulay's 'New Zealander' has been discovered in Horace Walpole's curious traveller from Lima; and the Theodora of 'Lothair' bears so strong a resemblance

[1] 'If in the hour of peril the statue of Liberty has been veiled for a moment, let it be confessed in justice that the hands whose painful duty it was to spread that veil, have not been the least prompt to remove it.'

to the Olympia of 'Half a Million of Money' as to raise a compromising conviction of identity. But these are trifles. On one of the most solemn and memorable occasions within living memory, in expressing as leader of the House of Commons the national feeling of gratitude and admiration for the hero of a hundred fights, Mr. Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield) took boldly and bodily, without the change of a word, rather more than a third of his prepared oration from the translation (by George Smythe, Lord Strangford) of an article in *La Revue Française* on the Memoirs of a French Marshal (St. Cyr) by M. Thiers.

We have been at some pains to illustrate the various shades and degrees of what is commonly called plagiarism; because Dumas has been accused of all of them, from the gravest to the lightest, and needs all the support and sanction that can be derived from example and authority. If we are to put faith in his assailants, he has pushed to extravagance the appropriation doctrine of Molière: he has rivalled not only the broom-maker who stole the materials, but the one who stole his brooms ready made: he has taken entire passages like Mr. Disraeli, complete stories like Voltaire and Lord Brougham: and as for plots, scenes, images, dialogues, if restitution to the original proprietors were enforced, he would be like the daw stripped of its borrowed plumes, or (to borrow a less hackneyed image from Lord Chatham) he would 'stand before the world, like our first parents, naked but not ashamed.' But somehow these charges, though pointedly urged, have utterly failed in their main object: there is no denying

the real genius, the genuine originality, of the man after all: and the decisive test is that what he takes assimilates to what he creates, and helps to form an harmonious whole, instead of lying, 'like lumps of marl upon a barren moor, encumbering what they cannot fertilise.' Nor is his one of those puny reputations that must be kept alive by nursing, that cannot bear exposure, that go down at once before a storm. On the contrary, it has almost invariably been confirmed and augmented by the most formidable attacks levelled at him, as a great flame is increased and spread by the wind which blows out a small one.

The autobiography of such a man could not well fail to abound in curious information, lively anecdote, and suggestive reflection; nor are these Memoirs wanting in merits of a more sterling order. They contain some capital canons of criticism; and, despite of the irrepressible influences of national and personal vanity, they are marked by a pervading spirit of kindly feeling and good sense. If ill-disposed to spare the errors and weaknesses of political adversaries, he is almost always candid and generous towards literary rivals. His highest admiration is reserved for real genius and true greatness; although the one may be fallen and the other out of fashion. It is never the reigning dynasty, nor the actual dispensers of favour and fortune, that are the objects of his most enthusiastic praise, but the friends or patrons who sacrificed their prospects to their principles, and lingered in exile, or died poor.

We wish we could add that he has kept himself equally free from interested considerations in his choice

of topics and materials; for it is impossible not to fancy that many of these have been pressed into the service with an exclusive eye to bookmaking. For example, a long chapter is filled with an abstract of Moore's 'Life of Byron;' and each volume contains episodical narratives of public events which have no peculiar bearing on his life. Still, we should gladly hail his reminiscences as a valuable contribution to the literary and political history of the nineteenth century if we could rely on their general accuracy. But we were startled at the commencement by sundry statements which, assuming them to be true, strikingly illustrate the maxim *le vrai n'est pas toujours le vraisemblable;* and we found more and more, as we proceeded, of what would go far towards justifying the theory of the late Vice-Chancellor Shadwell, who formally laid down from the judgment-seat that writers of fiction are not good witnesses, because they necessarily contract an incurable habit of trusting to their imagination for their facts. On this delicate point, however, our readers may judge for themselves after reading Dumas' account of his birth, parentage, and education.

It were to be wished that the same philosophical indifference touching the distinctions of birth which was exhibited by Sydney Smith had been manifested by all autobiographers who could not boast of an admitted or clearly established claim to ancestral honours; for an apocryphal progenitor is very far indeed from conciliating respect or favour for his *soi-disant* descendant. After stating that he was born on the 24th July, 1802, at Villers-Coterets, 'two hundred

paces from the *Rue de la Noue*, where Desmoutiers died, two leagues from Ferté-Milon, where Racine was born, and seven leagues from Château-Thierry, where La Fontaine first saw the light,' Dumas proceeds to state that his real hereditary name is not Dumas:

'I am one of the men of our epoch whose right has been contested to the greatest number of things. People have even contested my right to my name of Davy de la Pailleterie, to which I attach no great importance, since I have never borne it, and because it will only be found at the end of my name of Dumas in the official acts which I have executed before notaries, or in the documents in which I have figured as principal or witness.'

To prove his title to honourable designation, he prints an exact copy of the register of his birth, from which he undoubtedly appears to be the legitimate offspring of Thomas Alexandre Dumas-Davy de la Pailleterie, General, &c., &c., shown by other references to be the son of the Marquis de la Pailleterie, a French nobleman of ancient family, who, adds his grandson, 'by I know not what Court quarrel, or what speculative project, was induced, about 1760, to sell his property and domicile himself in St. Domingo.' It would seem that his expatriation did not last long, for in 1786 we find him settled in Paris, where the following brief dialogue between him and his son, the father of the narrator, explains the alleged change of name. The son calls upon the Marquis and announces a sudden resolution. 'What is it?' inquires the Marquis. 'To enlist.' 'As what?' 'As soldier.' 'Where?' 'In the first regiment that comes to hand.' 'As you like,'

replied my grandfather; 'but as I am the Marquis de la Pailleterie and Colonel Commissary-General of Artillery, I cannot permit my name to be dragged about in the lowest grades of the army.' 'Then you object to my enlisting?' 'No; but you will enlist under a *nom de guerre*.' 'Nothing can be more just; I will enlist under the name of Dumas.' 'Be it so.' And the Marquis, who had never been the tenderest of fathers, turned his back on his son, leaving him free to do as he chose. 'My father therefore enlisted, as agreed, under the name of Alexandre Dumas.' The Marquis died thirteen days afterwards, but the new recruit never assumed his hereditary name and title—an omission which might fairly warrant a passing doubt of his right to them, were it not for a certificate, signed by four notables of St. Germain en Laye, to the effect that he was by birth a genuine Davy de la Pailleterie.

This weighty question being disposed of, Dumas proceeds to enlarge on the corporeal advantages of his father, who, if he answered to the description, must have united the grace and beauty of Antinous to the strength of Hercules:

'He had the brown complexion, chestnut hair, soft eyes, and straight nose which belong exclusively to the mixture of the Indian and Caucasian races. He had white teeth, sympathetic lips, the neck well set upon powerful shoulders, and notwithstanding his height of five feet nine inches (French), the hand and foot of a woman. His foot in particular was the despair of his mistresses, whose slippers he was rarely unable to wear. *At the epoch of his marriage, his calf was exactly the size of my mother's waist.* His wild mode of

living in the colonies had developed his address and his strength in an extraordinary manner. He was a regular American cavalier, a Guacho. With gun or pistol, he did wonders of which St. Georges and Junot were jealous. As to his muscular force, it had become proverbial in the army. *More than once, he amused himself in the riding school, whilst passing under a beam, by taking this beam between his arms, and lifting his horse off the ground between his legs.* I have seen him (and I recollect the circumstance with all the excitement of childhood) carry two men upright on his bent leg and hop with them across the room. . . . . Dr. Ferus, who served under my father, has frequently related to me that, on the evening of his arrival to join the Army of the Alps, he saw by the fire of a bivouac a soldier who, amongst other feats of strength, was amusing himself by inserting his finger in the barrel of a musket and raising it, not at arm's length, but at finger's length. A man wrapped in a cloak mixed with the spectators and looked on like the rest, till, smiling and throwing off his cloak, he said, "Not bad that; now bring me four muskets." They obeyed, for they had recognised the General-in-Chief. He then inserted his four fingers in the four barrels, and lifted the four muskets with the same ease with which the soldier had lifted one. Ferus, when he told me this anecdote, was still at a loss to comprehend how a man's muscles could raise such a weight.'

We are as much at a loss as the Doctor; but further marvels are to come:

'During one of the General's Italian campaigns, the soldiers were forbidden to leave the camp without their side-arms under pain of forty-eight hours' arrest. My father was passing on horseback, when he met Père Moulin, since *maître d'hôtel* at the Palais-Royal, who, at this period, was

a tall and fine young man of twenty-five. Unluckily this tall and fine young man had no sword by his side. On seeing my father he set off on a run to gain a cross street; but my father, who had caught sight of the fugitive and guessed the cause of his flight, put his horse to the gallop, overtook him, and exclaiming, "So, rascal, you are resolved to get yourself assassinated;" collared him, and lifting him from the ground, without pressing or slackening the pace of his horse, my father carried the man thus in his talons as a hawk carries a lark, till, finding a *corps de garde* on his way, he threw Moulin towards them, exclaiming, "Forty-eight hours' arrest for that ——."'

The following incident may serve to convey a notion of the manner in which the General's personal prowess was exhibited against the enemy in the field:

'It was at Mauldi that my father found the first opportunity of distinguishing himself. Commanding as brigadier a look-out party composed of four dragoons, he unexpectedly fell in with an enemy's patrol composed of thirteen Tyrolese chasseurs and a corporal. To see and, notwithstanding the disparity of numbers, charge them, was the affair of an instant. The Tyrolese, who did not expect this sudden attack, retreated into a small meadow surrounded by a ditch wide enough to stop cavalry. But, as I have already observed, my father was an excellent horseman; and he was on an excellent horse called Joseph. He gathered up the reins, gave Joseph his head, cleared the ditch like M. de Montmorency, and found himself in an instant in the midst of the thirteen chasseurs, who, stupified by such hardihood, presented their arms and surrendered. The conqueror collected the thirteen rifles into a single bundle, placed them on his saddle-bow, compelled the thirteen men to move up to his four dragoons, who remained on the other side of the ditch

which they had been unable to clear, and having repassed the ditch the last man, he brought his prisoners to head-quarters. Prisoners were rare at this time. The appearance of four men bringing in thirteen produced a lively sensation in the camp.'

This we can well believe, and we know of no parallel for the exploit except that of the Irishman, who, single-handed, took four Frenchmen prisoners by surrounding them; or that of Sir Frizzle Pumpkin, to whom a squadron of cavalry surrendered at discretion on his coming suddenly upon them in a woody defile when he was consulting his personal safety by flight.

If an English writer were to begin in this fashion, his countrymen would most assuredly set him down for a rival of Munchausen, and haply hold themselves excused from attaching any serious importance to his future revelations, real or pretended. But in the case of a vivacious Frenchman, ample allowance must be made for a national habit which we would rather exemplify by instances than characterise in plain language.

If M. Lamartine occasionally laid himself open to censure by indiscretion, he rendered invaluable services to the cause of peace and order by his courage and presence of mind at an extremely critical period in 1848; and the praise of high-minded and unswerving integrity has been unanimously conceded to him. It is impossible to suspect such a man of wilful or conscious departure from veracity, and we may therefore cite the Waterloo chapter of his 'History of the Restoration' as one of the most remarkable examples on record of

the predominance of imagination over judgment in a Frenchman. M. Thiers's account of the battle of Trafalgar is substantially as much at variance with both fact and probability, though not quite so extravagant on the face of it, as M. Lamartine's 'Waterloo.' The extraordinary fictions to which French ministers and generals habitually resorted during the late war to keep up the spirits of the people and the troops, must be fresh in the recollection of our readers. There was not a pin to choose between the expiring Empire, the government of National Defence, or the government of the National Assembly, in this respect. No sooner had M. Thiers got together the semblance of an army, than he declared it to be the finest army ever possessed by France; and when, after several days of desultory street fighting, he had worn out rather than conquered the armed rabble of the capital, he proclaimed that the whole world was lost in admiration at the splendour of his victory and the irresistible prowess of French troops.

If we recal attention to this national weakness, it is simply for the purpose of suggesting that we cannot throw aside Dumas as unworthy of further notice by reason of his tendency to exaggeration, without laying down a rule which must prove fatal to the reputation of the most distinguished of his countrymen. Fortunately, too, the value of his 'Memoirs' consists principally in anecdotes and revelations which may be easily verified by accessible evidence, or in views, reflections, and criticisms based upon patent and acknowledged facts. With regard to the alleged events of his boyhood, we are inclined to assume his general accuracy

because we are utterly at a loss to see what motive he could have in inventing or colouring stories, most of which are by no means flattering to his self-love. He frankly tells us that he was bred up in poverty in a petty provincial town by a doting mother, whose fondness, we must do him the justice to add, he uniformly repays by the most affectionate and unremitting solicitude for her feelings and comforts. Indeed, the endearing and ennobling sentiment of filial love breathes throughout the whole of his family details as freshly and naturally as in Moore's Diary, thereby affording another striking proof that real goodness of heart may co-exist with a more than ordinary degree of vanity and self-consciousness, even when pampered by flattery and inflated by success.

Dumas's master-passion from boyhood was the chase, or, more correctly speaking, *la chasse*, which means something widely different from the corresponding word in English. One of the first official notices that used to meet the eye on the wooden pier or landing-place at Calais was, '*Il est défendu de chasser sur les ponts*,' a puzzling intimation to sportsmen who are not aware that almost everything that runs or flies is the legitimate object of *la chasse* in France. All is game that comes to the Gallic sportsman's bag. He does not despise a tomtit or yellowhammer: he regards a thrush as a prize, and he ruthlessly exults over the broken wing of a cock-robin or *rouge-gorge*. The Calais notice was especially addressed to sportsmen in pursuit of mud-larks. One of the most amusing stories composed or stolen (the fact is disputed) by Dumas, is 'La Chasse

au Chastre,' in which he depicts the trials and perils into which a worthy professor of music is hurried by the reckless pursuit of a fieldfare. He best can paint it who has felt it most, and Dumas is confessedly the chronicler of his own sensations in this book. Although he rose in time to the dignity of a regular poacher, and made unlawful prize of any stray hare or partridge that came within range, he dwells with unrestrained rapture upon the delights of the day when a friendly neighbour gave him leave to shoot larks upon a strictly preserved common. We also learn from his lively sketch of his first visit to Paris, that he undertook it in well-founded reliance on his skill as a sportsman for supplying the ways and means of the expedition. It was in 1822, when he was in his twentieth year, that this expedition was thus conceived and arranged in the course of a walk with a friend, a notary's clerk like himself.

'"Ah," I exclaimed, "an idea!" "What is it?"—"Let us go and spend three days at Paris." "And your office?"—"M. Lefevre (his master) himself starts for Paris to-morrow. He commonly stays away two or three days; in two or three days we shall be back." Paillot felt in his pockets, and pulled out twenty-eight francs. "Behold," said he, "all I possess! And you?"—"I have seven francs." "Twenty-eight and seven make thirty-five. How do you suppose we are to reach Paris with that? There is thirty francs for coach-hire to begin."—"Stop a minute, I have a way." 'What?"—"You have a horse?" "Yes."—"We pack our clothes in a portmanteau, we take our shooting-jackets and our guns, and we shoot as we go; we eat our game on the journey, and we spend nothing." "How is that to be managed?"—"Nothing easier: between this and Dam-

martin, for example, we shall kill a hare, two partridges, and a quail." "I hope we shall kill more than that."—"And so do I, but I take the lowest estimate. We arrive at Dammartin; we dress and eat our hare; we pay our wine, our bread, and our salt with the two partridges, and we give the quail to the waiter. We have nothing then to provide for but your horse, which may be well done for three francs a day."

'"But we have only one gun?"—"It is all we want; one of us will shoot, the other will follow on horseback. In this manner, it being sixteen leagues to Paris, we shall have only eight leagues each." "And the gamekeepers?"—"Ah, a precious obstacle! The one of us who is on horseback descries them at a distance; he gives due warning to the one who is shooting. The horseman dismounts, the sportsman mounts and gallops off the beat. As for the dismounted horseman, the keeper overtakes him, and finds him strolling along with his hands in his pockets. 'What are you doing here?'—'I! you see what I am doing.' 'Never mind, let us hear.'—'I am taking a walk.' 'Just now you were on horseback.'—'Well, is it contrary to law to take a walk after a ride?' 'No, but you were not alone.'—'That may be.' 'Your companion was shooting.'—'You don't say so.' 'He is down there on horseback with his gun.'—'If so, run after him and try to catch him.' 'But I can't run after him and catch him, since he is on horseback and I am on foot.'—'In this case, my friend, your better course would be to go to the first village and drink our health.' Whereupon we—you or I—give him a franc, which is set down to our account of profit and loss; the keeper makes his bow, and we continue our journey." "Well, well," exclaimed Paillot, "that is not badly imagined. I had heard that you had tried your hand at play-writing." "It is precisely to see Leuven on the subject of my attempts in this line that I wish to go to Paris." "Well, once at Paris ——"'

The scheme was forthwith put in practice. They started the same evening for Paris, where they arrived the night following, with four hares, twelve partridges, and two quails, for which the landlord of an hotel in the Rue des Vieux Augustins agrees to lodge and board them for two days and present them with a pâté and a bottle of wine at parting. Dumas's grand object was to see Talma, and his first visit is to a literary friend, who introduces him to the great actor at his toilette:

'Talma was very shortsighted. I do not know whether he saw me or not. He was washing his chest. His beard was nearly all shaved, which particularly struck me, insomuch as I had heard a dozen times that in *Hamlet* at the appearance of the father's ghost, Talma's hair was seen to stand on end. It must be owned that the aspect of Talma under these circumstances was far from poetical. However, when he stood upright, when, with the upper part of the body uncovered and the lower part enveloped in a kind of large mantle of white cloth, he took one of the ends of this mantle and drew it on his shoulder, so as to half-veil the breast; there was something imperial in the movement that made me tremble. Leuven explained the object of our call. Talma took up a kind of ancient stylus, at the end of which was a pen, and signed us an entrance ticket for two.'

What follows is characteristic. *Virgilium tantum vidi*; and our autobiographer cannot trust his readers to complete the natural train of association, but must fain suggest that the first meeting between the great actor and the great dramatist is not to be passed over as an everyday occurrence:

'He held out his hand to me. I longed to kiss it. With my dramatic notions, Talma was a god for me; an unknown

god, it is true—unknown as Jupiter was to Sémelé—but a god who appeared to me in the morning, and was to reveal himself to me at eve. Our hands touched. Oh, Talma, if you then had had twenty years less, or I twenty years more! All the honour was for me, Talma. I knew the past; you could not divine the future. If you had been told, Talma, that the hand you had just clasped would write sixty or eighty dramas, in each of which you, who were looking out for parts all your life, would have found a part that you would have converted into a marvel, you would hardly have parted so easily with the poor young man who coloured up to the eyes at seeing you, and was proud of having touched your hand. But how could you have seen this in me, Talma, since I did not see it in myself?'

An odd ebullition of the same sort once exposed him to a clever rebuke, attributed to Madame Déjazet. Arriving together on a theatrical expedition at Rouen, they were requested by the police to state their respective professions. '*Moi*,' said Dumas, '*si je n'étais pas dans la ville où fut né le grand Corneille, je me nommerais auteur dramatique.*' '*Et moi*,' said Déjazet, '*si je n'étais pas dans la ville où fut brûlée Jeanne d'Arc, je me nommerais pucelle.*' His son, the author of 'La Dame aux Camelias,' in reference to his complexion and his vanity, said of him: 'My father is capable of getting up behind his own carriage to make people believe that he has a man of colour for footman.' Dumas begins one of his chapters thus:—'I know not who—*perhaps myself*—has said that the Revolution of 1830 was the last shot of Waterloo. *It is a great truth.*' Yet the graceful and truthful apology which Lord Russell has made for Moore's vanity may be made with

equal justice for that of Dumas. It is a frank, joyous, and cordial vanity, without the slightest tincture of envy; and, far from seeking to depreciate his distinguished contemporaries, his proudest boast is that he has fairly earned a right to be named along with them:

'Across the friendships, the hates, the envies—in the midst of an existence harassed in its details, but always calm and serene in its progression—I have reached the place that God had marked out for me; I have reached it without intrigue, without coterie, and never elevating myself but by mounting on my own works. Arrived where I am, namely, at the summit which every man finds at the half-way point of life, I ask for nothing, wish for nothing. I envy nobody. I have many friendships. I have not a single enmity. If, at my starting-point, God had said to me, "Young man, what do you desire?" I should not have dared to ask from his omnipotent greatness that which he has been graciously pleased to grant me in his paternal goodness. I shall say then of these men whom I have named, so soon as I meet them on my road, all that there may be to say of them; if I hide anything, it will be the ill. Why should I be unjust towards them? There is not amongst them a glory or a fortune for which I have ever wished to change my reputation or my purse.

'Yesterday I read upon one of the stones of a house I had had built for myself, and which, whilst waiting for me—me or another—has hitherto lodged only sparrows and swallows—these words, written by an unknown hand: "*O Dumas! tu n'as pas su jouir, et pourtant tu regretteras.*"—*E. L.* I wrote under, "*Niais! si tu es un homme. Menteuse! si tu es une femme.*" *A. D.*—But I took good care not to efface the inscription.'

It is difficult to avoid sympathising with a man of genius who pours forth his soul in this fashion, and the egotism may be pardoned for the sake of the frankness and generosity of the burst. Neither, looking at the peculiar character of the writer, do we deem it clear that he formed an erroneous theory of what is called success in life, or that he had much reason to envy the majority of those who, according to their own or the popular estimate, may have made a better use of their opportunities. Every reflecting person must be the best judge of what is necessary to his (or her) happiness, and Dumas needed constant agitation and excitement, as well as notoriety. A fixed station, a defined rank, nay, even an established fortune, would have become irksome, fretting, and galling incumbrances when the flush of novelty had passed away. He would have felt like Manon Lescaut, when she declared the conventional restraints of constancy and propriety insufferable; when

> 'Virtue she found too painful an endeavour,
> Condemned to live in decencies for ever;'

or like the opium-eater when he was put upon the short allowance of fifty or sixty drops of laudanum per day.

It was the remark of an astute man of the world (an Italian), that if he could choose and portion out a new life, he would be a handsome woman till thirty, a victorious general from thirty to fifty, and a cardinal (i.e. a cardinal of the olden time) in his old age. A Frenchman of the Restoration and the July Monarchy might have hesitated between being a victorious general or an author in renown. 'Bear in mind,' wrote Jules

Janin, in 1839, 'that it is now the poets, the novelists, the dramatists, the journalists in renown, that have the titles, the coat-armour, the coronets. It is they that people press forward to gaze upon when they enter a room; it is they whose name the very lacquey pronounces with pride when he announces them. Let a Créqui and M. de Châteaubriand enter at the same time, and you will see on which side all heads and all hearts will incline first. Announce M. le Duc de Montmorency and M. de Balzac, and everybody will look first at M. de Balzac.' Under similar circumstances all eyes would have been turned towards Alexander Dumas; and when we reflect that what the majority of the world are striving for is to be distinguished amongst their fellows—*quod monstrer digito prætereuntium*—there is little room for surprise that he should have found ample compensation for all his labours and all his trials in his fame.

We left him exulting in the hope of seeing Talma act, and for once the reality did not fall short of the expectation. The play was 'Sylla,' one great attraction of which consisted in the analogy in the hero's fortunes, as depicted by the author of the piece, to those of Napoleon I. After the performance, Dumas was taken to see Talma in his dressing-room, which he found crowded with notabilities:

'Talma caught sight of me near the door. "Ah, ah," he said, "come forward." I advanced two steps nearer. "Well, Mr. Poet," he continued, "are you satisfied?"—"Better than that, I am lost in wonder." "Well, you must come and see me again, and ask me for more tickets."—

"Alas, I leave Paris to-morrow, or the day after at latest." "That's unlucky, you would have seen me in *Regulus*. You know that I have made them fix *Regulus* for the day after to-morrow, Lucien (Arnault, the author)?"—"Yes, I thank you," said Lucien. "What, you cannot stay till the day after to-morrow?"—"Impossible, I must return to the country." "What is your employment in the country?"—"I dare not tell you. I am clerk to a notary." "Bah," said Talma, "you must not despair on that account. Corneille was clerk to a procureur. Gentlemen, I present a future Corneille!" I coloured to the eyes. "Touch my forehead," I said, "it will bring me luck." Talma placed his hand upon my head. "Come then," said he, "so be it. Alexandre Dumas, I baptize thee poet in the name of Shakspeare, Corneille, and Schiller! Return to the country; resume your place in your office, and if thou hast verily the vocation, the angel of poetry will take care to find thee wherever thou art, to carry thee off by the hair of the head like the prophet Habakkuk, and to carry thee where thou hast work to do." I seized his hand, which I tried to carry to my lips. "*Allons, allons*," he exclaimed, "this lad has enthusiasm; we shall make something of him," and he shook me cordially by the hand.'

So ended this memorable interview, and Dumas returns to his province and his desk in a very bad mood for copying deeds or serving processes. His master probably saw that the embryo poet was likely to make a bad clerk; for Dumas immediately received warning that his future services would not be needed, and he forthwith set about the requisite preparations for the definitive transfer of his household gods to the capital. The want of money was the grand difficulty. He owed 150 francs to his tailor, and all his available assets con-

sisted of a dog named Pyramus, famous for voracity. This is not the precise quality which commends or adds value to an animal of the canine species, yet it proved the salvation of Dumas. His dog had left him to follow a butcher loaded with half a sheep, and he was in the very act of vainly endeavouring to parry the demands of the tailor, when he was informed that an Englishman requested the honour of his company at a neighbouring inn. On repairing thither, he finds a man, 'from forty to forty-five years of age, of a reddish fair complexion, with hair like a brush, and whiskers shaped like a collar, dressed in a blue coat with metal buttons, a shamois waistcoat, and gray kerseymere breeches, with gaiters to match, such as are worn by grooms. He was seated before a table on which he had just been dining, and which exhibited the remains of a dinner for six. He might weigh from three hundred to three hundred and sixty pounds.' Seated near him, with a depressed look, was Pyramus; and around Pyramus lay ten or a dozen plates, cleaned with that neatness which characterised him in respect to dirty plates. On one, however, lay some unfinished morsels. It was evidently these that caused the depression of Pyramus. '*Venez parler à moâ, Monsieur,*' said the Englishman; '*Le Dog a vos, il plait a moa.*' From a dialogue thus commenced and carried on in the same dialect by the stranger, we learn that the dog's power of eating had won his heart. '*Je aimé, moa,*' he exclaims, '*les animals et les gens qui mangé beaucoup; c'est qu'il ont un bon estomac, et le bon estomac il faisé le bon humour.*'

Our sagacious compatriot, it will be observed, differed

slightly from Lord Byron, who envies and commends the gifted mortals who have a bad heart and a good stomach, who feel little and digest well. But so much the better for Dumas, who, after a hard internal struggle with his conscience which is hushed by an opportune reminiscence of the dun, agrees to part with his four-footed friend for the moderate sum of five napoleons, only a third of the price which the fat Englishman was anxious to force upon him.

This anecdote is an apt illustration of the manner in which Dumas and other popular French authors perseveringly foster the prejudices of their countrymen. The fat and fair Englishman, with his broken French and ridiculous eccentricity, still keeps his place in their light literature and on their stage; although nearly half a century has elapsed since we, on this side of the Channel, ceased to believe in brown and lean marquises living on frogs and *soupe maigre*, taking enormous quantities of snuff, wearing collars or shirt fronts for want of shirts, and gaining a scanty livelihood as fiddlers or dancing-masters. A still longer period has elapsed since we tolerated, even in a Fielding or a Smollett, the coarseness of expression which has little, if at all, lessened the popularity or impeded the circulation of Paul de Kock, although the more fastidious portion of the Parisian public may disdainfully set down his works as '*la lecture des grisettes.*' These very memoirs are occasionally defaced by expressions and allusions for which it would be difficult to find a parallel in any respectable English publication of later date than the editions of Pope containing the Poisoning and the Circumcision of Edmund Curll.

Relieved from difficulty by his dog, like Whittington by his cat, our hero is preparing to start for Paris. The five napoleons having been reduced one-half by a payment on account to the tailor, he hits upon an ingenious expedient for defraying the expenses of his journey. He plays billiards with the bookkeeper of the diligence for a *petit verre d'absinthe* a game, and leaves off the winner of 600 glasses, which, at three sous each, make a total gain of ninety francs, enough to pay for twelve places to Paris. He satisfies himself with one, arrives on the scene of his future glory with his fifty francs untouched, and proceeds to look round for a protector amongst the old friends of his father on the strength of his name. He is coldly received by Marshal Jourdain, and narrates as follows the result of his visit to Marshal (then General) Sebastiani:

'The General was in his cabinet; at the four corners of this cabinet were four secretaries, as at the four corners of our almanack are the four points of the compass or the four winds. These four secretaries were writing to his dictation. It was three less than Cæsar, but two more than Napoleon. Each of these secretaries had on his desk—besides his pen, his paper, and his penknife—a gold snuff-box which he presented open to the General, each time that the latter stopped before him. The General delicately introduced the forefinger and thumb of a hand that his half-cousin Napoleon would have envied for its whiteness, voluptuously inhaled the scent, and then resumed his walk. My visit was short. Whatever my consideration for the General, I felt little disposed to become a snuff-box bearer.'

He is coolly bowed out by another military friend of his father, and calls, as a last resource, on General

Foy, to whom he has fortunately the additional recommendation of being the friend and protégé of one of the General's most influential constituents. His reception was favourable, and the following colloquy takes place:

"I must first know what you are good for."—"Oh, not much." "Of course you know a little mathematics?"—"No, General." "You have at least some notions of algebra, of geometry, of physics?" He paused between each word, and at each word I felt myself colouring more and more. It was the first time that I was placed face to face with my ignorance.—"No, General," I replied, stammering, "I know none of these." "You have gone through your law course, at all events?"—"No, General." "You know Latin and Greek?"—"Latin, a little: Greek, not a word." "Do you speak any living language?"—"Italian." "Do you understand accounts?"—"Not at all." I was in torture, and he suffered visibly on my account. . . . . "And yet," he resumed, "I am unwilling to abandon you."—"No, General, for you would not abandon me only. I am a dunce, an idler, it is true; but my mother, who reckons upon me, whom I have promised to find a place,—my mother ought not to be punished for my ignorance and my idleness." "Give me your address," said the General, "I will consider what can be made of you. There, at this desk." He offered me the pen with which he had been writing. I took it, I looked at it, wet as it still was; then, shaking my head, I returned it to him.—"No, General," I said, "I will not write with your pen; it would be a profanation." He smiled. "What a child you are," he continued. "Here then is a new one." I began to write, with the General looking on. Hardly had I written my name than he clapped his hands. "We are saved," he exclaimed, "you write a good hand." My head dropped upon my breast—I had no longer strength to bear

up against my shame. A good handwriting: this was the sum total of my qualifications. This brevet of incapacity, oh! it was mine beyond dispute.'

This brevet of incapacity, however, has been possessed by a large majority of the most illustrious men of all ages, and it is only within the century that persons of superior education have deemed themselves licensed to indulge in an inconvenient and selfish degree of negligence in this respect. It will appear from any good collection of autographs that, if our ancestors were deficient in orthography, they were proficients in caligraphy, and that they became comparatively careless as to their penmanship about the time when they began to pay strict attention to their spelling. In particular, they invariably made a point of signing their names clearly and distinctly, in marked contrast to the modern fashion, which often renders it impossible to do more than guess at the identity of a correspondent. In the round-robin addressed to Dr. Johnson on the subject of Goldsmith's epitaph (a facsimile of which is given by Boswell), the names of the most distinguished malcontents—Gibbon, Burke, Sheridan, Colman, Joseph Warton, Reynolds, &c.—although affixed at the dinner-table, bear no marks of haste or slovenliness; and amongst the French authors of the eighteenth century, the two most remarkable for the excellence of their handwriting were Voltaire and Rousseau.

The press of public business may be alleged as some excuse for statesmen; whilst the hurry and flutter of composition may account for the bad writing of poets

and authors of the imaginative class. When Napoleon first attained power, his signature was of the orthodox length and character; it gradually shrank to the three first letters (Nap.); and later in his career it consisted of a dash or scrawl intended for an N. Byron latterly wrote a sad scrawl. Yet against these great names may be placed Washington, Wellington, Pitt, Fox, Canning, Peel, Moore, Rogers, Scott, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and a host of famous contemporaries, whose example, we hope, will save both 'young France' and 'young England' from the mischievous error of ever again regarding an eminently useful and becoming accomplishment as a 'brevet of incapacity.'

On the strength of his handwriting, Dumas is received into the establishment of the Duke of Orleans (afterwards King of the French) as a clerk at sixty pounds a year, and is singularly fortunate in finding amongst his companions of the desks one duly qualified to give him some excellent advice as to his literary projects. As an indispensable preparation for the historical romance, he is told to read Joinville, Froissart, Monstrelet, Chatelain, Juvénal des Ursins, Montluc, Saulex-Tavannes, l'Estoile, De Retz, Saint-Simon, Villars, Madame de la Fayette, Richelieu; and he then begs to have a course of poetic reading marked out for him.

'"In the first place, what have you read?"—"Voltaire, Parny, Bertin, Demoustier, Legouvé, Colardeau." "Good. Forget the whole of them. Read, in antiquity, amongst the Romans, Virgil; in the middle age, Dante. It is living marrow that I am now prescribing for you." "And amongst

the moderns?"—"Ronsard, Mathurin, Regnier, Milton, Goethe, Uhland, Byron, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, and, above all, a little volume about to appear entitled 'André Chénier.'"'

Dumas's first publication was a volume containing three novels, entitled 'Nouvelles Contemporaines.' He sold four copies, neither more nor less, and having contributed 300 francs (borrowed money) towards the printing, began to turn over in his mind the suggestions of an intelligent publisher: 'Make yourself a name and I will print for you':

'There (he continues) was the entire question. Make yourself a name. This is the condition imposed on every man who ever made himself one. This is the condition which at the moment when it was imposed on him, he has asked himself despairingly how he was to fulfil. And yet he has fulfilled it. I am no believer in unknown talent, in undiscovered genius. There were reasons for the suicide of Escousse and Lebras. It is a hard thing to say—but neither one nor the other of these two poor madmen, if he had lived, would have had at the end of twenty years of work the reputation which the epitaph of Béranger conferred upon them.[1] I therefore seriously set about making myself a name, to sell my books and not print them again at half profits.'

[1] Escousse and Lebras were two young men who, on the failure of a small piece at a minor theatre, shut themselves up in a garret with a pan of charcoal and suffocated themselves. Escousse left in prose and verse pathetic appeals to the press to do justice to his memory, and especially to state that 'Escousse killed himself because he felt his place was not here, because the love of glory did not sufficiently animate his soul, *if he had a soul*.'

It was as dramatist that he was resolved to make the desiderated name; and the time was singularly opportune, for the innovating and vivifying influences which had transformed and elevated the literature of the Restoration were on the point of extending to the stage—that stage which had survived the monarchy, survived the republic, survived the first empire, and might have survived the second but for the united and co-operating energies of two master spirits, of whom Dumas took the lead. 'Well, M. de Fontanes, have you found me a poet?' was the habitual demand of the would-be Augustus every time he met his improvised Mæcenas. The answer was uniformly in the negative: poetry could not be made to order; poets would not be forthcoming, like armed legions, at the stamp of the iron heel of a despot. Yet they began to crop up abundantly as soon as they were allowed to breathe freely:

'Their names gave present promise of the immense reverberation they were to produce in the future. Lamartine. Hugo, De Vigny, Sainte-Beuve, Méry, Scribe, Barbier, Alfred de Musset, Balzac—these fed with their sap or rather with their blood that large and unique spring of poetry at which the whole nineteenth century, France, Europe, the universe, were to drink. But the movement was not only in this Pleïad: an entire soldiery was engaged, co-operating in a general work by particular attacks: it was who should batter the old poetry in breach. Dittmer and Cavé published the "Soirées de Neuilly"; Vitot, the "Barricades" and the "États de Blois"; Mérimée, the "Théâtre de Clara Gazul." And observe well that all this was beside the theatre, beside the acting drama, beside the real struggle. The real struggle,

it was myself and Hugo—I am speaking chronologically—who were about to engage in it.'

This claim is recognised and confirmed by Sir Henry Bulwer (Lord Dalling), writing in the height of the contest between the Classicists and Romanticists, intimately acquainted with both schools and fully imbued with the spirit of the period:

'This (the age of Louis Quatorze) was a great period of the human mind, and, from this period to our own, tragedy has taken but one giant stride. The genius which governed the theatre stood unappalled, when the genius that had founded the throne lay prostrate. The reign of Robespierre did not disturb the rule of Racine. The republican Chénier, erect and firm before the tyranny of Bonaparte, bowed before the tyranny of the Academy. The translations of Ducis were a homage to the genius of Shakspeare but no change in the dramatic art. In M. Delavigne you see the old school modernised, but it is the old school. I pass by M. de Vigny, who has written "La Maréchale d'Ancre": I pass by M. Soulier, who has written "Clotilde": I pass by the followers to arrive at the chiefs of the new drama, M. Victor Hugo and M. Alexandre Dumas.'[1]

It was a clear gain to the dramatist to be emancipated from the rigid observance of the unities, to be free to choose subjects from modern history or the ordinary walks of life, to drape them appropriately and make them talk naturally, instead of being tied down to Greek and Roman models, or rather what

[1] *France: Social, Literary, Political.* By Henry Lytton Bulwer, Esq., M.P. In two volumes. London, 1834.

passed for Greek and Roman amongst the courtiers of the Grand Monarque. But a revolution in literature and art is as difficult to moderate as a revolution in government: it is idle to play Canute, and say 'thus far shalt thou go, and no farther' to the advancing waves of thought: we must take the evil with the good; and it was Victor Hugo himself who drew a parallel between the excesses of the Reign of Terror and what he called the nightmares of the new school, as the necessities or inevitable results of progress. The extravagance to which they pushed their doctrine may be collected from the fact that, on the night of their crowning triumph after the first representation of 'Henri Trois,' a party of them formed a ring by joining hands in the *foyer* of the Théâtre-Français, and danced round the bust of Racine, shouting in chorus, '*Enfoncé, Racine! Enfoncé, Racine!*' Dumas, to do him justice, never lost his reverence for the best classic models, and in the first of his accepted dramas, 'Christine,' he was obviously still trammelled by their rules. The representation of this play was indefinitely postponed through a theatrical intrigue, which is amusingly detailed in the Memoirs:

'What happened to me during this period of suspense? One of those accidents which only happen to the predestined gave me the subject of Henri Trois as another had given me the subject of Christine. The only cupboard in my bureau was common to Ferisse (his fellow-clerk) and me. In it I kept my paper: he, his bottles. One day, whether by inadvertence or to establish the superiority of his rights, he took away the key of this cupboard. Having three or four docu-

ments to transcribe, and being out of paper, I repaired to the accountant's office to get some. A volume of Anquetil lay open upon a desk: I cast my eyes mechanically on the page and read what follows.'

What he read was a scene between the Duc de Guise and the Duchesse, in which the Duc compels her to choose between the dagger and the bowl. This led Dumas to study the domestic history of the pair and the manners of the period. The result was the play familiar to English readers as 'Catherine of Cleves' It succeeded, and deserved to succeed: the historical portraits were true and lifelike; the tone and manners in perfect keeping with the times; and the leading scenes admirably adapted for effect. The part of the Duchesse was played by Mademoiselle Mars, who was the tyrant of the green-room as well as the queen of the stage:

'After the reading, I was summoned to the director's cabinet, where I found Mademoiselle Mars, who began with that sort of brutality which was habitual to her!—"Ah, it is you? We must take care not to make the same *bêtises* as in 'Christine.'" "What *bêtises*, Madame?"—"In the distribution of parts."—"True, I had the honour of giving you the part of Christine, and you have not acted it."—"That may be: there is a good deal to be said on that subject; but I promise you I will play that of the Duchess of Guise."—"Then, you take it?"—"Of course. Was it not intended for me?"—"Certainly, Madame."—"Well, then?"—"Therefore I thank you most sincerely." "Now, the Duc de Guise. To whom do you give the Duc de Guise?"'

They differ upon this part and two or three others which Dumas refuses to her friends:

'"So far so good: now for the page. I play three scenes with him. I give you fair warning that I insist on some one who suits me for this part.—There is Madame Menjaud, who will play it to admiration."—"Madame Menjaud has talent, but she wants the physical qualities for the part."—"Oh, this is too much! And doubtless this part is given too?"—"Yes, Madame, it is, to Mademoiselle Louise Despreaux." "Choose her for a page!" "Why not? Is she not pretty?"—"Oh yes, but it is not enough to be pretty." "Has she not talent?"—"It may come in time; but make that little girl play the page!" "I am ready to listen to any good reason why she should not."—"Well then, see her in tights; and you will see that she is horribly knock-kneed."

. . . . .

'I made my bow and took my departure, leaving Mademoiselle Mars stupefied. It was the first time an author had held out against her. I must confess, however, that the legs of my page kept running in my head.'

The young lady turned out an unexceptionable page in all respects; and Dumas explains that the real objection to her was her youth. Mademoiselle Mars at fifty-one did not wish to be brought into close contact with sweet seventeen.

From the moment Dumas took up the position of—

> 'Some youth his parents' wishes doomed to cross,
> Who pens a stanza when he should engross,'

his official superiors lost no opportunity of finding fault with him, and at length the Duc d'Orléans was over-persuaded to write against his name: *Supprimer les gratifications de M. Alexandre Dumas, qui s'occupe de littérature.* Unabashed by this marked disapproval,

Dumas, the day before the first performance of his play, boldly presented himself at the Palais-Royal and demanded to speak with his royal master. Under the belief that he came by appointment, he was admitted.

'"So, M. Dumas, it is you. What good wind brings you, or rather brings you back?"—"Monseigneur, 'Henri Trois' is to be brought out to-morrow, and I came to ask your Highness, as a favour, or rather an act of justice, to attend my first representation. During a full year passed since your Highness has been assured that I am a vain, headstrong, foolish fellow—during a full year I have maintained that I am a humble and hard-working poet: you have sided, without hearing me, with my accusers. Haply your Highness should have waited: your Highness judged differently and has not waited. To-morrow the cause comes before the public to be judged. Be present, Monseigneur, at the judgment. This is the prayer I come to prefer."

'"With the greatest pleasure," replied the Prince, after a brief hesitation, "but unluckily it is impossible; judge for yourself. I have twenty or thirty princes and princesses to dinner to-morrow." "Does your Highness believe that the first performance of 'Henri Trois' would be a curious spectacle to offer to these princes and princesses?" "How can I offer it to them? The dinner is at six and the performance begins at seven."—"Let Monseigneur put on the dinner an hour, I will put off 'Henri Trois' an hour. Your Highness will have three hours to satisfy the appetites of your august guests." "But where shall I put them? I have only three boxes."—"I have requested the administration not to dispose of the gallery till I should have seen your Highness." "You took for granted then that I should consent to attend." —"I reckoned on your justice. . . . Monseigneur, I appeal to Philip sober."'

This was published, and passed unchallenged, when Philip sober was on the throne. The house was crowded with princes and notabilities: twenty louis were given for a box. The fate of the piece hung on the third act, especially on the scene where the Duc, grasping his wife's wrist with his gauntletted hand, compels her to write the note of assignation to Saint-Megrin. 'This scene raised cries of terror, but simultaneously elicited thunders of applause: it was the first time that dramatic scenes of such force, I may also say of such brutality, had been risked upon the boards.'

At the conclusion of the third act, Dumas hurries off to the sick-bed of his mother, and returns just in time to witness a complete success, and receive the enthusiastic congratulations of his friends. 'Few men have seen so rapid a change operated in their life as was operated in mine during the five hours that the representation lasted. Completely unknown the evening before, I was the talk of all Paris, for evil or for good, on the morrow. There are enmities, enmities of persons I have never seen, enmities that date from the obtrusive noise made by my name at this epoch. There are friendships, too, that date from it. How many envied me this evening, who little thought that I passed the night on a mattress by the bedside of my dying mother.'

The Duc d'Orléans (Louis Philippe) was present at the second representation also, and called Dumas to his box. After the expected compliments and congratulations, he was informed that he had nearly got his royal patron into a scrape:

'"How so, Monseigneur?" "Why, *à propos* of your drama. The king (Charles X.) sent for me yesterday, and began, '*Mon cousin* (laying a marked emphasis on our relationship), I am told that you have in your employment a young man who has written a play in which we both have parts, I that of Henri Trois, and you that of the Duc de Guise.'"—"Your Highness might have replied that this young man was no longer in your employment." "No, I declined saying what was not true, for I retain you. I replied, 'Sire, you have been misinformed for three reasons. The first is that I do not use personal violence to my wife; the second, that she is not unfaithful to me; the third, that your Majesty has no more faithful subject than myself.' Is not this a better reply than the one you suggested to me?"'

An attempt was made to prevent the second representation of the piece through the censorship, and, on this failing, a formal protest against its admission into the repertory of the Théâtre Français, signed by seven men of letters more or less eminent, was presented to the King, who replied, in terms no doubt suggested by his Minister, Martignac:

'"Messieurs: Je ne puis rien pour ce que vous désirez; je n'ai, comme tous les Français, qu'une place au parterre."'

The utmost that could be urged against the originality of this play was that two or three incidents had been borrowed and turned to good account. The act of violence by which the Duc de Guise extorts the signature of his wife was probably suggested by the scene in 'The Abbot' between Lord Lindsay and Queen Mary. In 'The Conspiracy of Venice,' Fiesco's suspicions are excited by finding his wife's handkerchief wet with

tears in a room which she and Calcagno have just left; and the Duchesse de Guise's handkerchief, found in a compromising spot, is what first turns the Duc's suspicions on her lover. This incident gave rise to the epigram:

'Messieurs et Mesdames, cette pièce est morale,
Elle prouve aujourd'hui, sans faire de scandale,
Que chez un amant, lorsqu'on va le soir,
On peut oublier tout—excepté son mouchoir.'

Although the accusation of immorality was unscrupulously brought against the chiefs of the romantic school, they were not more open to it than the classicists in regard to the choice of subjects, so long as these were taken from history. The most repulsive subject ever chosen by either of them, that of 'La Tour de Nesle' for example, was not more repulsive than that of 'Medea' or 'Œdipus;' and neither Lucrèce Borgia nor Marion Delorme could be put to shame by Phèdre, who sums up her ruling passion in one line:

'C'est Venus tout entière à sa proie attachée.'

A plot laid in the middle ages, in a corrupt French or Italian court, should be judged by the same rules as one laid in Thebes or Colchis. Nor should a poet or dramatist be summarily condemned for immorality, merely because he describes immoral actions or brings immoral characters on the stage, so long as these are true to nature and correct representatives of their epoch, with its passions, its vices, and its crimes. Dramas can no more be compounded entirely of virtue, than revolutions can be made with rose-water. It was when Dumas

abandoned the past for the present, forsook romance for reality, chose his heroes and heroines from modern life, and bade us sympathise with their perverted notions of right and wrong, their systematic defiance of all social ties, their sensuality and their selfishness,—when, in short, he 'dressed up the nineteenth century in a livery of heroism, turned up with assassination and incest,' that he justly fell within the critic's ban, and gave point to the most stinging epigram levelled at his school:

> 'A croire ces Messieurs, on ne voit dans les rues,
> Que des enfants trouvés et des femmes perdues.'

In his drama of 'Antony' he sets all notions of morality at defiance; yet his bitterest opponents were obliged to confess that it bore the strongest impress of originality, and that its faults were quite as much those of the epoch, of the applauding public, as of the author. 'It contains,' says one of them, 'badly put together, illogical and odious as it is, scenes of touching sensibility and intense pathos.' 'It is perhaps the play,' says Bulwer, 'in which the public have seen most to admire.' The plot is simple, the action rapid; each act contains an event, and each event developes the character, and tends to the catastrophe.'

Antony is a man formed after the Byronic model, gloomy and saturnine, whose birth (illegitimate) and position are a mystery. He is in love with Adèle, a young lady of family and fortune, who returns his passion, but not venturing to propose to her, he suddenly disappears, and is absent for three years; at the end of

which he returns, to find her the wife of Colonel d'Hervey, with a daughter. In the first act an opportune accident causes him to be domiciled in her house whilst her husband is away.[1] Explanations take place. He eloquently expatiates on his love, his heart-broken condition, his despair; and Adèle, distrusting her own powers of prolonged resistance, suddenly gives him the slip, orders post-horses, and makes the best of her way to join the Colonel at Frankfort. She is pursued by Antony, who passes her on the road, arrives first at the little inn at which she is compelled to sleep for want of post-horses, and makes arrangements as to rooms, which may be collected from the result.

'*Adèle.* Jamais il n'est arrivé d'accident dans cet hôtel ?

'*L'Hôtesse.* Jamais. . . Si Madame veut, je ferai veiller quelqu'un ?

'*Adèle.* Non, non . . . au fait, pardon . . . laissez-moi . . . (*Elle rentre dans le cabinet et ferme la porte*).

'*Antony paraît sur le balcon, derrière la fenêtre, casse un carreau, passe son bras, ouvre l'espagnolette, entre vivement, et va mettre le verrou à la porte par laquelle est sortie l'hôtesse.*

'*Adèle* (*sortant du cabinet*). Du bruit . . . un homme . . . ah ! . . .

'*Antony.* Silence ! . . . (*La prenant dans ses bras et lui mettant un mouchoir sur la bouche.*) C'est moi . . . moi, Antony . . . (*Il l'entraîne dans le cabinet*).'

This is the end of the third act. In the fourth, the lovers are again in Paris and suffering tortures from the

[1] *À propos* of plagiarism, this mode of bringing the lover under the conjugal roof is employed by Charles de Bernard in his fascinating novel, *Gerfault.*

sarcasms and covert allusions of their social circle, in which their inn adventure has got wind. Antony, hearing that the Colonel will arrive within the hour, has only just time to prepare Adèle for the meeting. We borrow Bulwer's translation of the catastrophe:

'*Adèle.* Oh! it's he. . . Oh! my God: my God! Have pity on me! pardon, pardon!

'*Antony.* Come, it is over now!

'*Adèle.* Somebody's coming upstairs . . . somebody rings. It's my husband—fly, fly!

'*Antony* (*fastening the door*). Not I—I fly not . . . Listen! . . . You said just now that you did not fear death.

'*Adèle.* No, no . . . Oh! kill me, for pity's sake.

'*Antony.* A death that would save thy reputation, that of thy child?

'*Adèle.* I beg for it on my knees.

'*A voice from without, "Open, open! break open the door!"*)

'*Antony.* And in thy last breath thou wilt not curse thy assassin?

'*Adèle.* I'll bless him—but be quick . . . that door!

'*Antony.* Fear nothing! death shall be here before anyone. But reflect on it well—death!

'*Adèle.* I beg it—wish it—implore it (*throwing herself into his arms*)—I come to seek it.

'*Antony* (*kissing her*). Well then, die.

'(*He stabs her with a poignard.*)

'*Adèle* (*falling into a fauteuil*). Ah!

'(*At the same moment the door is forced open, Col. d'Hervey rushes on the stage.*)

SCENE IV.

'*Col. d'Hervey, Antony, Adèle, and different servants.*

'*Col. d'Hervey.* Wretch!—What do I see?—Adèle!

'*Antony.* Dead, yes dead!—she *resisted me*, and I *assassinated her.*

'(*He throws his dagger at the Colonel's feet.*)'

In point of conventional delicacy or propriety, the action of this play is not more objectionable than 'La Grande Duchesse,' and even the concluding scene of the third act is not more hazardous than the critical one in 'Tartuffe,' nor than the famous scene in 'Les Intimes,' which, after an unavailing remonstrance from our decorous and esteemed Lord Chamberlain (Lord Sydney), Mademoiselle Fargueil played in her own manner to one of the most aristocratic audiences which this metropolis could supply. But the profound immorality, the ingrained corruption and perversion of principle, the mockery of sensibility, which pervade 'Antony' and struck a sympathetic chord in a highly cultivated audience (half the notabilities of Paris being present at the first representation) are positively startling. There is nothing to idealise: nothing to throw a delusive halo over vice: not a particle of ennobling passion—

'That exquisite passion—ay, exquisite, even
In the ruin its madness too often hath made,
As it keeps even then a bright trace of the heaven,
The heaven of virtue, from which it has strayed.'

What one redeeming quality has Adèle, who only shrinks from remaining under the conjugal roof and affecting innocence for fear of discovery? What one redeeming quality has Antony, if we except the nerve to perpetrate crime, and the courage to face the criminal court? He is hard, selfish, material, brutal throughout;

and the crowning atrocity is an absurdity. There is a novel by Count de Jarnac in which the hero endures torture, and is ready to endure death, rather than compromise a woman. This is natural and (it is to be hoped) not very improbable. But how could Antony hope to silence a scandal, which was already the talk of Paris, by deepening it? What human being would believe that he had killed his known, almost avowed, mistress for resisting him? But the French mind, or rather the mind of the French play-going public, is so constituted that a moral paradox or sentimental extravagance fascinates them, and they will applaud impulsively whatever creates a sensation or excites, however false or foolish in conception or in act. And that public, when 'Antony' was brought out, was still fevered and disordered, still seething and surging, from the Revolution of July. The subversive spirit was in the ascendant: established rules and principles had shared the fate of established institutions: the legitimate drama had fallen with the legitimate monarchy; and the Academy was at a discount, like the throne.

The sole place of refuge for the classic muse, the single fane at which the sacred fire was still kept burning by her worshippers, was the Théâtre Français. Yet it only escaped profanation by a caprice. 'Antony' had been accepted there: an early day had been fixed for the first representation, and the company were assembled for the last rehearsal, when Dumas hurries in with excuses for being late, and the following dialogue takes place between him and Mademoiselle Mars, who was to play Adèle:

'*Mars.* The delay is of no consequence; you have heard what has happened? We are to have a new chandelier, and be lighted with gas!

'*Dumas.* So much the better.

'*Mars.* Not exactly; I have laid out 1,200 francs (48 pounds) for your piece. I have four different *toilettes.*[1] I wish them to be seen; and since we are to have a new chandelier——

'*Dumas.* How soon?

'*Mars.* In three months.

'*Dumas.* Well!

'*Mars.* Well, we will play "Antony" to inaugurate the new lustre.'

The new lustre was a pretence. The company of the classical theatre had resolved not to act the piece. It was immediately transferred to the more congenial atmosphere of the Porte St. Martin, to which Victor Hugo emigrated about the same time; and this theatre thenceforth became the headquarters of their school. The part of Adèle was played by Madame Dorval, and played *con amore* in every sense of the phrase. On learning the arrival of her husband, Adèle exclaims, *Mais je suis perdue, moi!* At the last rehearsal, Madame Dorval was still at a loss how to give full effect to these words, and, stepping forward, requested to speak to the author. 'How did Mademoiselle Mars say *Mais je suis perdue, moi*'? 'She was sitting down, and she stood up.' 'Good,' replied Dorval, 'I will be standing up, and sit down.' On the first night of the performance, owing to some inadvertence, the arm-

[1] We beg our female readers to mark this and meditate on it. Four complete *toilettes* or costumes for forty-eight pounds!

chair into which she was to drop was not properly placed, and she fell back against the arm, but the words were given with so thrilling an expression of despair that the house rang with applause.

The key to the plot being in the last position and last words, the angry disappointment of the audience may be guessed, when one evening the stage-manager let down the curtain as soon as Antony had stabbed Adèle. *Le dénouement! Le dénouement!* was the sustained cry from every part of the house; till Madame Dorval resumed her recumbent position, as dead or dying woman, to complete the performance. But Bocage (who acted Antony), furious at the blunder, stayed away, and the call was renewed in menacing tones, when Dorval raised her drooping head, reanimated her inert form, advanced to the footlights, and in the midst of a dead silence, gave the words with a startling and telling variation: *Messieurs, je lui résistais, il m'a assassinée.* Dumas complacently records this incident with apparent unconsciousness of the ridicule which it mingles with the supposed pathos or horror of the catastrophe.

The chief honours of the poetical revolution are assigned by Dumas to Lamartine and Victor Hugo, but the dramatic revolution, he insists, began with the first representation of 'Henri Trois.' Hugo, an anxious spectator, was one of the first to offer his congratulations: 'It is now my turn,' were his words to Dumas, 'and I invite you to be present at the first reading.' The day following he chose his subject; and 'Marion Delorme,' begun on the 1st June, 1829, was finished on the 27th. Dumas was true to his engagement, and at

the end of the reading he exclaimed to the Director—'We are all done brown (*flambés*) if Victor has not this very day produced the best piece he ever will produce—only I believe he has.' 'Why so?' 'Because there are in "Marion Delorme" all the qualities of the mature author, and none of the faults of the young one. Progress is impossible for any one who begins by a complete or nearly complete work.'

'Marion Delorme' was stopped by the censorship, and did not appear till after 'Antony.' The striking similarity between the two heroes of the two pieces raised and justified a cry that one was copied from the other, and suspicion fell upon Hugo, who came last before the public; when Dumas gallantly stepped forward and declared that, if there was any plagiarism in the matter, he was the guilty person, since, before writing 'Antony,' he had attended the reading of 'Marion Delorme.'

An amusing instance of the manner in which Hugo was piqued into abandoning the Théâtre Français for the Porte St. Martin, is related by Dumas. At the rehearsal of 'Hernani,' the author as usual being seated in the pit, Mademoiselle Mars, who played Doña Sol, came forward to the footlights shading her eyes with her hand and, affecting not to see Hugo, asked if he was there. He rose and announced his presence:

'"Ah, good. Tell me, M. Hugo, I have to speak this verse—

Vous êtes mon lion! Superbe et généreux."

'"Yes, madame, Hernani says:

Hélas! j'aime pourtant d'un amour bien profond!
Ne pleure pas . . . mourons plutôt. Que n'ai-je un monde,
Je te le donnerais! . . . Je suis bien malheureux.

And you reply:

Vous êtes mon lion! Superbe et généreux."

'"And you like that, M. Hugo? To say the truth, it seems so droll for me to call M. Firmin *mon lion*."

'"Ah, because in playing the part of Doña Sol, you wish to continue Mademoiselle Mars. If you were truly the ward of Ruy Gomez de Sylva, a noble Castilian of the sixteenth century, you would not see M. Firmin in Hernani; you would see one of those terrible leaders of bands that made Charles V. tremble in his capital. You would feel that such a woman may call a man her *lion*, and you would not think it droll."

'"Very well; since you stick to your lion, I am here to speak what is set down for me. There is *mon lion* in the manuscript, so here goes, M. Firmin:

Vous êtes mon lion! Superbe et généreux."'

At the actual representation she broke faith, and substituted *Monseigneur* for *mon lion*, which (at all events from the author's point of view) was substituting prose for poetry. Nothing can be more injudicious or vain than the attempt to tone down a writer of originality or force; for the electric chain of imagination or thought may be broken by the change or omission of a word. The romantic school which delighted in hazardous effects—in effects often resting on the thin line which separates the sublime from the ridiculous—could least of all endure this description of criticism. Dumas suffered like his friend; and their concerted secession

to the Porte St. Martin was a prudent as well as inevitable step.

At this theatre Dumas was like the air, a chartered libertine; and here he brought out a succession of pieces, which, thanks to his prodigality of resource and unrivalled knowledge of stage effect, secured and permanently retained an applauding public, although many of them seemed written to try to what extent the recognised rules of art might be set aside. To take 'La Tour de Nesle,' for example, we agree with Bulwer, that, judged by the ordinary rules of criticism, it is a melodramatic monstrosity; but if you think that to seize, to excite, to suspend, to transport the feelings of an audience, to keep them with an eye eager, an attention unflagged, from the first scene to the last—if you think that to do this is to be a dramatist, that to have done this is to have written a drama—bow down to M. Dumas or M. Gaillard, to the author of 'La Tour de Nesle' whoever he be: that man is a dramatist, the piece he has written is a drama:

'Go and see it! There is great art, great nature, great improbability, all massed and mingled all together in the rapid rush of terrible things, which pour upon you, press upon you, keep you fixed to your seat, breathless, motionless. And then a pause comes—the piece is over—you shake your head, you stretch your limbs, you still feel shocked, bewildered, and walk home as if awakened from a terrible nightmare. Such is the effect of the "Tour de Nesle."'

Such *was* the effect when Mademoiselle Georges played Marguerite, and Frédéric Le Maître, Buridan;

and (independently of the acting) the rapid succession of surprises makes it a masterpiece in its way. No one can doubt that these are the creation of Dumas, along with everything else that constitutes the distinctive merit or demerit of the piece. We should also say, Go and see 'Mademoiselle de Belle-Isle:' you will follow the action with rapt and constantly growing interest; and you will listen to sparkling dialogue, exquisitely adapted to the characters.

It was as a dramatist that Dumas became famous, although his world-wide renown is owing to his romances, which he composed at headlong speed contemporaneously with his dramas, without much adding to his reputation, until 1844–45, when he published 'Les Trois Mousquetaires,' 'Vingt Ans Après,' and 'Monte Christo,' the most popular of his works. There is hardly an inhabited district in either hemisphere, in which Dumas, pointing to a volume of one of them, might not exclaim like Johnson pointing to a copy of the duodecimo edition of his Dictionary in a country-house:

'Quæ regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?'

They have remained the most popular, and remained moreover exclusively associated with his name, although the authorship has been confidently assigned by critics of repute to others, and the most persistent ridicule has been levelled at their conception, their composition, their materials, and their plan. Amongst the most mischievous assailants was Thackeray, in a letter addressed to M. le Marquis Davy de le Pailleterie, printed in the 'Revue Britannique' for January 1847. We give a specimen:

'As for me, I am a decided partisan of the new system of which you are the inventor in France. I like your romances in one-and-twenty volumes, whilst regretting all the time that there are so many blank pages between your chapters and so small an amount of printed matter in your pages. I, moreover, like your continuations. I have not skipped a word of "Monte Christo," and it made me quite happy, when, after having read eight volumes of the "Trois Mousquetaires," I saw M. Rolandi, the excellent circulating-library man who supplies me with books, bring me ten more under the title of "Vingt Ans Après." May you make Athos, Porthos, and Aramis live a hundred years, to treat us to twelve volumes more of their adventures! May the physician (Médecin) whose "Mémoires" you have taken in hand, beginning them at the commencement of the reign of Louis XV., make the fortunes of the apothecaries of the Revolution of July by his prescriptions!'

Innumerable readers would reciprocate in earnest the wishes thus ironically expressed, and Thackeray might have remembered that length is more a merit than an objection so long as interest is kept up. It is strange, too, that he should have hailed Dumas as the inventor of the voluminous novel, particularly after calling attention to the blank pages between his chapters and the small amount of printed matter in his pages. There is an English translation of 'Les Trois Mousquetaires,' in one royal-octavo volume, and of 'Monte Christo' in three volumes octavo. The seven volumes of 'Clarissa Harlowe' contain more printed matter than the longest of Dumas's romances. Mademoiselle Scudéry beats him hollow in length and might be apostrophised like her brother:

'Bienheureux Scudéry, dont la fertile plume,
Peut tous les mois sans peine enfanter un volume.'

So does Restif de la Bretonne, one of the most popular novelists of the eighteenth century, whose 'Les Contemporaines' is in forty-two volumes.

So much for length. In point of plot, they are on a par with 'Don Quixote' and 'Gil Blas:' in point of incident, situation, character, animated narrative, and dialogue, they will rarely lose by comparison with the author of 'Waverley.' Compare, for example, the scene in 'Les Trois Mousquetaires' between Buckingham and Anne of Austria, with the strikingly analogous scene between Leicester and Elizabeth in 'Kenilworth.'

If Dumas occasionally spun out his romances till they grew wearisome, it was not because he was incapable of compressing them. His 'Chevalier d'Harmenthal,' which we are inclined to consider one of his best novels, is contained in three volumes. His 'Impressions de Voyage' abound in short novels, and in stories which are quite incomparable in their way, like pictures by Meissonier and Gérôme. Take, for dramatic effect, the story told by the monk of La Chartreuse; or, for genuine humour, that of Pierrot, the donkey, who had such a terror of fire and water that they were obliged to blind him before passing a forge or a bridge. The explanation is, that two young Parisians had hired him for a journey; and, having recently suffered from cold, they hit upon an expedient which they carried into execution without delay. They began by putting a layer of wet turf upon his back, then a layer of snow, then another layer of turf, and lastly a bundle of fire-

wood, which they lighted, and thus improvised a moveable fire to warm them on their walk. All went well till the turf was dried and the fire reached poor Pierrot's back, when he set off braying, kicking, and rolling, till he rolled into an icy stream, where he lay for some hours; so as to be half frozen after being half roasted. Hence the combination of hydrophobia and pyrophobia which afflicted him.

Where Dumas erred and fell behind was in pushing to excess the failing with which Byron reproached Scott—

> 'Let others spin their meagre brains for hire,
> Enough for genius if itself inspire.'

He could not resist the temptation of making hay whilst the sun shone—of using his popularity as if, like the purse of Fortunatus, it had been inexhaustible—of overtasking his powers till, like those of the overtasked elephant, they proved unequal to the call. There was a period, near the end of his life, when Theodore Hook, besides editing a newspaper and a magazine, was (to use his own expression) driving three novels or stories abreast—in other words, contemporaneously composing them. Dumas boasts of having engaged for five at once; and the tradesmanlike manner in which he made his bargains was remarkable. 'M. Véron (the proprietor of the "Constitutionnel" came to me and said: "We are ruined if we do not publish, within eight days, an amusing, sparkling, interesting romance."—"You require a volume: that is, 6,000 lines: that is, 135 pages of my writing. Here is paper; number and mark (*paraphez*) 135 pages."'

Sued for non-performance of contract, and pleading his own cause, he magniloquently apostrophised the Court: 'The Academicians are Forty. Let them contract to supply you with eighty volumes in a year: they will make you bankrupt! Alone I have done what never man did before nor ever will do again.' We need hardly add that the stipulated work was imperfectly and unequally done:

'Sunt bona, sunt mediocria, sunt mala plura.'

Du Halde is said to have composed his 'Description géographique et historique' of China without quitting Paris, and Dumas certainly wrote 'Quinze Jours au Sinai' and 'De Paris à Astracan,' without once setting foot in Asia. But most of his 'Impressions de Voyage,' in France, Italy, Spain, &c., were the results of actual travel; and his expedition to Algeria in a Government steamer with a literary mission from the Government, gave rise to an animated debate in the Chamber of Deputies (February 10, 1847), in which he was rudely handled till M. de Salvandy (Minister of Public Instruction) came to the rescue, and, after justifying the mission, added: 'The same writer had received similar missions under administrations anterior to mine.' Dumas (we are assured) meditated a challenge to M. Léon de Malleville for injurious words spoken in this debate, and requested M. Viennet, as President of the Society of Men of Letters, to act as his friend. M. Viennet, after desiring the request to be reduced to writing, wrote a formal refusal, alleging that M. Dumas, having in some sort, before the civil tribunal of the

Seine, abdicated the title of man of letters to assume that of marquis, had no longer a claim on the official head of the literary republic. Hereupon the meditated challenge was given up. The representation of 'Les Mohicans de Paris,' a popular drama brought out by Dumas in 1864, having been prohibited by the censorship, he addressed and printed a spirited remonstrance to the Emperor:

'Sire,—There were in 1830, and there are still, three men at the head of French literature. These three men are Victor Hugo, Lamartine, and myself.

'Victor Hugo is proscribed; Lamartine is ruined. People cannot proscribe me like Hugo; there is nothing in my life, in my writings, or in my words, for proscription to fasten on. But they can ruin me like Lamartine; and in effect they are ruining me.

'I know not what ill-will animates the censorship against me. I have written and published twelve hundred volumes. It is not for me to appreciate them in a literary point of view. Translated into all languages, they have been as far as steam could carry them. Although I am the least worthy of the three, these volumes have made me, in the five parts of the world, the most popular of the three; perhaps because one is a thinker, the other a dreamer, and I am but a vulgariser (*vulgarisateur*).

'Of these twelve hundred volumes, there is not one which may not be given to read to a workman of the Faubourg St. Antoine, the most republican—or to a young girl of the Faubourg St. Germain, the most modest—of all our faubourgs.'

His politics were never incendiary or dangerous in any way. They were always those of a moderate Re-

publican, and he consistently adhered to them. His best romances rarely transgress propriety, and are entirely free from that hard, cold, sceptical, materialist, illusion-destroying tone, which is so repelling in Balzac and many others of the most popular French novelists. But Dumas must have formed a strange notion of the young ladies of the noble faubourg to suppose that they could sit out a representation of 'Antony' or 'Angèle' without a blush. After recapitulating the misdeeds of the imperial censorship and the enormous losses he had sustained, he concludes:

'I appeal, then, for the first time, and probably for the last, to the prince whose hand I had the honour to clasp at Arenenberg, at Ham, and at the Élysée, and who, having found me in the character of proselyte on the road of exile and on that of the prison, has never found me in the character of petitioner on the road of the empire.'

The Emperor, who never turned a deaf ear on a proselyte or companion on either road, immediately caused the prohibition to be withdrawn.

One of the strangest episodes of the Neapolitan revolution was the appearance of Alexander Dumas as its annalist. His arrival at Turin, on his way to Naples, created a sensation; and M. d'Ideville, who had been acquainted with him at Paris, was commissioned by the Marchesa Alfieri (Cavour's niece) to ask if it would be agreeable to him to meet Cavour and some other persons of literary or political distinction at her *salon*. The invitation was declined:

'"Convey my warmest acknowledgments and deepest regrets to the Marchesa: it is impossible for me to accept.

Would you like to know why? Well, then, I should meet her uncle, the Count de Cavour, and I would not see him for any money. This surprises you, my dear friend. I will tell you my reason. I leave Turin in twenty-four hours: I embark at Genoa: in three days I shall be with Garibaldi. I do not know him, but I have written to him: he expects me. This man is a hero, a sublime adventurer, a personage of romance. With him, out of him, I expect to make something. He is a madman, a simpleton, if you like, but an heroic simpleton; we shall get on capitally together. What would you have *me* make out of Cavour; me, remember? Cavour is a great statesman, a consummate politician, a man of genius. He is a cut above Garibaldi; don't I know it? But he does not wear a red shirt. He wears a black coat, a white cravat, like an advocate or a diplomate. I should see him, I should converse with him, and, like so many others, I should be seduced by his play of mind and his good sense. Adieu to my promising expedition. My Garibaldi would be spoilt. On no consideration, then, will I see your President of the Council. He cannot be my man any more than I can be his. I am an artist, and Garibaldi alone has attractions for me. Although I visit no one here but deputies of the Extreme Left, Brofferio, and others, tell M. Cavour, I beg, that I fly from him because I admire him; and make him clearly understand why I quit Turin without seeing him."'[1]

Dumas judged rightly. He would have made nothing out of Cavour, and he made a very good thing out of Garibaldi; although not exactly as he had anticipated, namely, by treating him artistically and making him the picturesque hero of a romance. Garibaldi was too picturesque already to stand any fresh

[1] *Journal d'un Diplomate en Italie.* Paris, 1872.

draping and colouring. As not unfrequently happens, no ideal could surpass the real, no fiction could improve upon the fact. He stood in no need of the *vate sacro*; in his case, the simplest chronicler was the best, and the simplest might well be suspected of exaggeration by posterity. Dumas's books on Garibaldi and his exploits never attracted much attention, and are already forgotten. But the hero and the romanticist became sworn friends at sight, and Dumas was immediately installed in the palace of Chiatamone with the title and perquisites of Superintendent or Director of the Fine Arts. Here he lived at free quarters till the dictatorship ended and order was restored.

The next time Dumas passed through Turin, M. d'Ideville met him at a supper party, Garibaldi became the subject of conversation, and it appeared that Dumas's enthusiasm had been in no respect lessened by familiarity:

'Towards the end of the entertainment, to close the series of anecdotes relating to the dictator: "See here," said Dumas, with singular solemnity and unfolding a scrap of paper, "here are lines written by him which shall never quit me! You must know, my friends, that having had a fancy to see Victor Emmanuel, whom I do not know, I asked Garibaldi for a note of introduction to present to the King." "Here," replied Garibaldi, handing me these words hastily written, "this will be your passport." And the charming narrator passed round the scrap of crumpled paper, which contained this unique phrase: "*Sire, recevez Dumas, c'est mon ami et le vôtre.—G. Garibaldi.*" "You may well believe," added Dumas, respectfully replacing the letter in his breast pocket, "that to preserve this autograph, which

the King would doubtless have desired to keep, I deprived myself, without regret, of the acquaintance of King Victor. And now that the sovereign has shown his ingratitude towards Garibaldi, to whom he is so much obliged, you may judge whether he will not have a long time to wait for my visit."'

The illness which ended with his death, brought on a complete paralysis of all his faculties, and he died towards the close of 1870, happily insensible to the hourly increasing disasters and humiliations of his country.

Occurring at a less anxious and occupied period, his death would have been commemorated as one of the leading events of the year, and it would hardly have been left to a foreign journal to pay the first earnest tribute to his memory. Take him for all in all, he richly merits a niche in the Temple of Fame; and what writer does not who has been unceasingly before the public for nearly half a century without once forfeiting his popularity?—whose multifarious productions have been equally and constantly in request in London, Paris, St. Petersburg, Madrid, Vienna, Calcutta, Sydney, and New York. Think of the amount of amusement and information he has diffused, the weary hours he has helped to while away, the despondency he has lightened, the sick-beds he has relieved, the gay fancies, the humorous associations, the inspiriting thoughts, we owe to him. To lie on a sofa and read eternal new novels of Marivaux or Crébillon, was the *beau idéal*, the day dream, of Gray, one of the choicest and most fastidious minds of the eighteenth century, and what is there of

Marivaux or Crébillon to compete in attractiveness with the wondrous fortunes of a Monte Christo or the chivalrous adventures of a D'Artagnan?

A title to fame, like a chain of proofs, may be cumulative. It may rest on the multiplicity and universality of production and capacity. Voltaire, for example, who symbolises an age, produced no one work in poetry or prose that approximates to first-rate in its kind, if we except 'Candide' and 'Zadig;' and their kind is not the first. Dumas must be judged by the same standard; as one who was at everything in the ring, whose foot was ever in the stirrup, whose lance was ever in the rest, who infused new life into the acting drama, indefinitely extended the domain of fiction, and (in his 'Impressions de Voyage') invented a new literature of the road. So judged—as he will be, when French criticism shall raise its drooping head and have time to look about it—he will certainly take rank as one of the three or four most popular, influential, and gifted writers that the France of the nineteenth century has produced.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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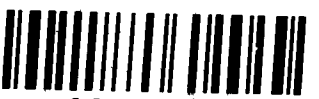
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